



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Ninety-second session

Summary record of the 2194th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 12 February 2026, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Haidar

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

Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 18 of the Convention *(continued)*

Tenth periodic report of El Salvador (CEDAW/C/SLV/10; CEDAW/C/SLV/Q/10; CEDAW/C/SLV/RQ/10)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of El Salvador joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of El Salvador**, introducing her country's tenth periodic report (CEDAW/C/SLV/10), said that international human rights law was a fundamental pillar of democracy and the rule of law in her country. Since President Nayib Bukele had assumed office in 2019, women's and girls' rights had been mainstreamed across all areas of public policy. In 2024, the Government had conducted the seventh population and housing census, which had revealed that women accounted for 52.8% of the population and that 45% of households were headed by women. Such findings guided and informed the Government's decisions and policies in areas such as development, care and the protection of families. The data collected through tools such as its gender equality index were used to monitor the State's fulfilment of its international obligations and adjust its policy response as it worked to advance women's role in society.
3. For decades in El Salvador, criminals had imposed exclusion and terror on entire communities, where women were confined by invisible borders. Thanks to the Territorial Control Plan, those communities had been liberated and freedom of movement had returned. By dismantling criminal groups, the State had achieved a historic reduction in violence against women, ensured real and effective justice throughout the country and restored public trust in State institutions. By building prosecution capacity, with respect for due process, the Government had shown that impunity was no longer the norm and that El Salvador was transitioning from a fragmented response and isolated efforts to an interconnected and effective justice system, supported by international cooperation. Institutions were taking practical measures, and service provision had been strengthened. For example, the Supreme Court had adopted protocols whereby multidisciplinary teams served vulnerable population groups. The Counsel General's Office had established a specialized unit which in 2025 had provided more than 65,000 legal and psychosocial services. An automated child support register had been launched to ensure that the financial burden of raising a child did not fall solely on mothers.
4. Transformative processes were under way in the criminal justice system. The Deputy Prosecutor's Office for Women, Children, Adolescents and Other Vulnerable Groups had adopted standard criteria to ensure a consistent and victim-centred expert response. The State had introduced a specialized care programme for relatives of femicide victims, under which it provided psychosocial support and sought to develop long-term support networks.
5. Women increasingly occupied important posts in the public administration. High public offices held by women included the deputy speakership of the Legislative Assembly, the presidency of the Supreme Electoral Court and several ministerial portfolios, including foreign affairs.
6. Migrant and returnee women exercised their rights without discrimination. Protection mechanisms for migrant women had been strengthened in the light of the risks that they faced. The Government addressed the migration issue through an approach that combined international action and social protection, ensured dignity and applied a gender perspective.
7. To protect women's dignity in the digital era, the Legislative Assembly had adopted the Personal Data Protection Act as the country's first comprehensive legal framework to ensure the secure and transparent processing of information; updated the Cybercrime and Related Offences Special Act to strengthen the investigation and punishment of fraud and sexual violence online; and the Artificial Intelligence Promotion Act, laying the foundation for research into artificial intelligence and similar technologies, and the development and application of related tools, in the public and private sectors. El Salvador had pioneered the development of algorithms that integrated the principles of equality and non-discrimination. The SOS Women Workers platform had been developed so that women could report

workplace or sexual harassment anonymously, with the authorities responding immediately to reported violations.

8. In the health system, the Government had reversed decades of rural abandonment by ensuring the connectivity of health facilities throughout the country. More than 1,450 health professionals provided care through a new telemedicine system, DoctorSV, while the 131 and 132 hotlines had enabled the monitoring of pregnancy, childbirth and the post-partum period, drastically reducing obstetric risks. Since the adoption of the Caring Births Act, maternal mortality had more than halved. More than 500 breastfeeding rooms had been fitted out, and almost 99% of newborns commenced breastfeeding in their first hour of life. A centre for comprehensive maternal and child care and nutrition had been established to improve the care provided to vulnerable pregnant women. The Government addressed mental health through the “I’m Listening” (Te Escucho) hotline, while the national strategy for the prevention of teenage pregnancy had cut the adolescent pregnancy rate from 45.8% to 30% in just three years, thanks to youth-friendly services based on autonomy and confidentiality.

9. The “My New School” reform package was transforming the education system into a genuine driver of social mobility and equality. The Government had reinforced its scholarships strategy, which benefited more than 50,000 university and vocational students. Through its Get Qualified (Certificate) platform, the Government had opened the gates of the knowledge economy to more than a million students, providing free access to courses in technology, digital skills and English.

10. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women ensured that the principles of equality and non-discrimination were systematically applied in all public institutions; it also promoted preventive and protective measures that guaranteed women’s right to a life free from violence. The National Equality Plan, the national policy on a violence-free life for women and the national policy on co-responsibility for care 2022–2030 together formed a road map for coordinated cross-sectoral action to bridge gaps that limited the exercise of women’s rights. To meet women’s needs in accordance with its Convention obligations, the State had trained more than 37,000 public servants in human rights and due diligence. Some 1.3 million women had accessed the comprehensive health, psychological and legal services provided by specialized women’s centres.

11. For generations, the care burden had fallen disproportionately on women, limiting their opportunities, well-being and exercise of rights. However, through the national policy on co-responsibility for care, the country was moving gradually towards an integrated care system by expanding the range of services available at the local level, benefiting children and adolescents, older persons, persons with disabilities and caregivers. Under the Growing Together Act, the Government was setting up early childhood centres to ensure that young children received loving care, stimulation and good quality education. A training and awareness strategy had been devised to promote the professionalization of carers and decent care work, and a national training curriculum with a human rights-based approach was being introduced for caregivers of older persons. A national study of the care economy and a cost analysis of care services had been carried out. The Government’s care strategy was designed to protect women throughout their lives and ensure that they did not have to choose between their safety, their economic advancement and the care of their family.

12. The Government had been working to strengthen women’s economic independence. Its economic plan was driving a transformation in the food, technology and logistics sectors, creating employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for women. It had allocated \$1.5 million to female-run businesses through an entrepreneurship and working capital fund. A programme of support for small and medium-sized enterprises was designed to eliminate barriers to credit for female-run businesses, while the MercaMujer initiative had provided spaces for more than 34,000 women entrepreneurs to market their goods.

13. Under its labour mobility policy, the Government managed 17,000 job placements that provided for the regular and secure employment of Salvadorans abroad. It had adopted a protocol to assist women returnees, to ensure that return was not stigmatized but seen as an opportunity for reinvention. Programmes such as Women: Transforming Lives afforded women returnees a comprehensive pathway that included health, housing and seed capital.

In disadvantaged regions, the Rural Progress programme contributed to the food security and leadership of rural and Indigenous women.

14. Specific programmes had been implemented to ensure access to adequate housing for female heads of household and women in situations of violence or mobility. Under the Homes for Women Programme, more than 23,000 women had received legal title to their homes, allowing them to break the cycle of violence and dependence. The eligibility criteria had been relaxed so that a wider range of women could benefit from the Programme. Between 2022 and 2024, the Social Housing Fund had invested \$617.1 million in 37,100 households, 55% headed by women. Thanks to the improved security situation, 9,000 homes had been recovered and made available for survivors of violence and female heads of household to purchase with preferential conditions.

15. In the sphere of employment, the Government had aligned its policies with International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and had ratified the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190). In 2023, the Labour Code had been amended to include a provision on the immediate reinstatement of women who were dismissed during or after pregnancy. To advance towards substantive equality, the authorities conducted inspections to verify gaps in wages and working conditions in different types of companies, with more than 600 such inspections conducted in 2024. The Government used the Labour Market Information System as a strategic tool to analyse data and optimize decision-making in the labour sphere. The tourism industry had established itself as a powerful driver of inclusion: women occupied 85% of jobs and owned 75% of registered companies in the sector.

16. Several measures had been taken to promote the inclusion, protect the rights and strengthen the autonomy of vulnerable women and girls. Under the “Eliminating Barriers” strategic plan, the Government had provided schools with assistive technologies and accessible materials so that girls with disabilities could achieve their potential. In the framework of the national policy for Indigenous Peoples, it had taken steps to strengthen women’s participation in decision-making and to guarantee their collective rights. Older Indigenous women had been positioned as leaders in rebuilding the social fabric and transmitting knowledge. The aim of the Women Peacebuilders Programme was to strengthen women’s leadership by training and accrediting them as local community mediators and human rights defenders.

Articles 1–6

17. **Ms. Toledo Vásquez** said that the State Party had made significant progress since the previous review. She welcomed, in particular, the ratification of the ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), ILO Convention No. 190 and the Convention against Discrimination in Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Constitution and legislation prohibited discrimination against women and the Equality, Equity and Elimination of Discrimination against Women Act recognized both direct and indirect discrimination; however, she was concerned that the State Party had no legal framework that addressed multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and that equality policies lacked references to sexual orientation and gender identity, which had been dismissed as “gender ideology”. She therefore wished to know how the State Party guaranteed the rights of all women, including lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, and what steps had been taken to increase the visibility of the Convention before the courts and among rural, Indigenous and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, women with disabilities and women deprived of liberty.

18. She was also concerned about the impact on women’s rights of the “state of exception” that had been in force for almost four years. Although women accounted for only a minority of detainees, they carried a heavy burden in terms of childcare and in searching for and supporting detained family members. The Committee had received reports of intimidation, surveillance and criminalization of feminist organizations, journalists and community defenders. The Foreign Agents Act granted the authorities broad powers, and a growing number of women’s organizations were deciding to close down their operations rather than face severe penalties. Consequently, she wished to know what the gender impact had been of measures taken under the state of exception; what mechanisms were in place to protect

women human rights defenders and female family members of detainees; and how the State Party ensured that the Act did not disproportionately restrict the work of women's organizations. She wondered how the right to a fair trial could be respected under circumstances in which due process had been suspended, detainees had been held incommunicado and some women had been subjected to collective trials with dozens or hundreds of defendants.

19. Furthermore, given the low number of convictions for gender-based violence offences, the lack of human and technical resources available to the judiciary and the lack of specialized courts in rural areas, she wished to know how the special fund for women victims of violence was being used to benefit women and girls. It would be useful to know what steps had been taken to ensure access to justice for women affected by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Lastly, noting that there had been few convictions for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during the armed conflict, she asked how the State Party ensured access to justice for victims, including victims of sexual violence, and the meaningful participation of women's organizations in transitional justice and peacebuilding processes.

20. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the Foreign Agents Act was not designed to restrict the activities of civil society organizations and had not restricted their funding. The Act had been adopted to remedy the complete lack of oversight of cooperation activities, including in terms of the origin of funding, and to address concerns that those activities were becoming fragmented and ineffective. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had assumed a mediation and coordination role and had met with multilateral bodies to hear their concerns about the Act, most of which had been resolved. In adopting the Act, the Government did not seek to close down organizations but rather to effectively organize their activities. The El Salvador Agency for International Cooperation had established contact with international partners and civil society organizations and asked them to explain their activities so that the Government could coordinate, support and empower them. The reality on the ground was very different to that which had been reported in the international media.

21. **A representative of El Salvador** said that public policies to guarantee women's human rights included the National Equality Plan 2021–2025, whose eight components were aligned with established priorities for advancing substantive equality, and the national policy on a violence-free life for women, which established a set of strategies for the prevention, detection, response to and punishment of violence against women. Those instruments recognized the importance of identifying the specific circumstances of Indigenous, rural and older women and women with disabilities and were a clear expression of the Government's political will to uphold the rights of women.

22. **A representative of El Salvador** said that, since 2013, the Counsel General's Office had reported annually on the activities it had undertaken in defence of women's human rights. In 2022, it had established a specialized prosecutor's office for women, which handled complaints of gender-based discrimination and provided comprehensive services for women who had experienced situations of violence.

23. In the context of the state of exception, the Counsel General's Office discharged its constitutional mandate through its Public Defender Unit, which was tasked with ensuring respect for fundamental safeguards for persons deprived of their liberty. Public defenders participated in all stages of proceedings, ensuring that no woman would appear in court without expert legal advice and representation. The Unit also reviewed the legality of proceedings and detention. Public defenders were trained to take account of variables such as whether a female defendant had been threatened or coerced by a criminal group and could argue for exculpatory or extenuating circumstances. Public defenders could draw on social studies and contextual analysis to provide evidence of a situation of violence or social exclusion. The Counsel General's Office had a virtual assistance centre that provided support and information for family members of persons deprived of their liberty.

24. **A representative of El Salvador** said that under the Administration of President Bukele, prisons had been transformed into genuine centres for rehabilitation and social reintegration. The 19 prisons currently operational in El Salvador ensured decent and humane conditions of detention. The Prisons Act provided for several types of facilities, such as preventive detention centres, sentence enforcement centres and high-security prisons, and an

additional category had been created for vulnerable prisoners, leading to the establishment of specific facilities for women, pregnant women, older women, persons with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and foreign nationals.

25. There were two women's prisons in El Salvador. Apanteos Prison in Santa Ana, which held most of the country's convicted female prisoners, applied a "zero idleness" philosophy, meaning that inmates were required to participate in productive, educational or rehabilitative activities. Pregnant women, women living with their children, foreign women, women with disabilities, older women and women with chronic degenerative diseases were detained at Izalco Prison Farm, an open facility with an emphasis on work and the development of children. Female prisoners at Izalco had access to basic services, including health, food and personal hygiene products. They were not held incommunicado; in fact, women living with their children enjoyed family visits so that the children could build relationships with their families. Foreign prisoners received visits from their diplomatic and consular representatives.

26. **A representative of El Salvador** said that, to remove the structural barriers that hindered women's access to justice, the Government had developed a territorial model that combined community justice, specialized courts and comprehensive assistance. A national judicial facilitators service had been established, composed of 720 judicial facilitators (384 women and 336 men), who were community leaders from remote rural areas. Facilitators coordinated the delivery of justice services with the municipal courts in all municipalities and districts, providing legal advice, support and referral to competent institutions. The community justice model had increased public trust and reduced cultural barriers for women victims of violence, while complying with the constitutional requirement of swift and complete justice and international standards.

27. Municipal courts played a fundamental role at the preliminary stage of proceedings that were subsequently heard by the specialized courts for a life free of violence and discrimination for women, and they could order urgent measures. In addition, they heard family law cases on matters such as conciliation of disputes, child support and alimony and liquidation of the marital property regime. Judges possessed sufficient expertise to provide an immediate justice response at the local level, without needing to refer cases to other courts.

28. Specialized courts for a life free of violence and discrimination for women had been set up in 2016. Covering the whole country, they cooperated with the municipal courts and applied the Domestic Violence Act, the Special Comprehensive Act on a Violence-Free Life for Women and the Equality, Equity and Elimination of Discrimination against Women Act. They were competent to order personal protection, financial and therapeutic measures, as well as remedies such as compensation, rehabilitation, measures of satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition.

29. As part of the reform of the judiciary, the Supreme Court had established a Gender Unit in 2006; as a result, it could point to many judgments in which the gender perspective had been taken into account. Comprehensive victim support services had been established in selected courts. Their primary function was to facilitate effective access to justice by providing comprehensive and specialized care for victims of gender-based violence, domestic violence, sexual abuse and child abuse. They provided psychological, medical, social and legal assistance, with the aim of preventing revictimization and strengthening psychosocial recovery. El Salvador had thus transformed its model of access to justice to one that was territorial, specialized, multidisciplinary and gender-sensitive.

30. The state of exception had been declared after decades during which much of the national territory had been under the de facto control of violent gangs. In 2015, the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court had declared the gangs to be terrorist organizations, as they arrogated to themselves State functions, controlling territory, imposing taxes through extortion and dominating through systemic violence. The social control they had exercised had not been gender neutral: they had overseen a deeply misogynistic culture in which women had been forced to join criminal groups, become partners of gang leaders or smuggle illicit items into prisons. Women and girls had been instrumentalized in drug trafficking and extortion and had endured forced motherhood and sexual exploitation. Girls had been forbidden, under threat of violence, from attending schools in areas controlled by rival gangs. Women had been unable to engage in the most basic economic activities without

having to pay extortion money, and they had been prevented from accessing healthcare and reporting acts of violence to the authorities. Women's rights and freedoms had thus been completely negated.

31. Regarding due process in the context of the state of exception, it should be noted that only certain specific guarantees had been suspended, such as the constitutional requirement to bring detainees before a judge within 72 hours. Other fundamental rights had not been suspended. Judicial oversight continued and accused persons still had effective access to an expert defence. Public defenders continued to fulfil their duties, including in gang-related cases.

32. The state of exception and the recovery of territorial control had created the material conditions for women to effectively enjoy their rights. They were now free to carry out economic activities without extortion, to move around in their communities and to access health, education and justice services without restrictions.

33. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the impact of the Territorial Control Plan had been such that the overall homicide rate had fallen by 90% and the female homicide rate by 68%, reflecting a significant improvement in women's safety. One underappreciated aspect of the Plan, which the Government was working to strengthen, was known as the "integration phase", during which communities formerly affected by armed conflict or gang control learned to live in peace again. In that context, the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women had developed strategies to bring specialized services to the territories that had been recovered, while projects were undertaken to meet the specific needs of women of all ages.

34. **Ms. Toledo Vásquez**, recalling the principle of leaving no one behind, said that she would be interested to hear more about the situation of vulnerable women and women in detention. In particular, she would be interested to know what action had been taken on behalf of women who had been forced to join criminal groups, become the partners of gang leaders or been used to commit crimes, and who were now imprisoned.

35. The Committee was concerned that municipal judges might not have the same level of knowledge of gender issues and the Convention as the specialized violence courts. She wondered what steps might be taken to improve the training received by such judges.

36. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the Government was taking steps to strengthen the specialization of municipal judges. The Judicial College of the National Council of the Judiciary had delivered training on gender violence and the human rights-based approach, while the Supreme Court also implemented a training programme. The Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court had a coordination office specializing in case law related to vulnerable persons, gender-based violence and hate crime, which had established clear guidance for the judiciary when it came to handling such cases. The Court was also setting up a platform for the organization of case law, so that judges working in municipal courts, specialized violence courts and family, labour and civil courts could access Supreme Court judgments on the rights of women, vulnerable persons and hate crime. The Supreme Court had also organized training of trainers on sentencing and the evaluation of evidence, with an approach centred on the rights of women, children and adolescents. To avoid the revictimization of persons affected by femicide and sexual violence, workshops had been organized to strengthen the capacity of justice officials to recognize stereotypes and avoid prejudice and bias in their decision-making. The Supreme Court was developing a handbook on adjudication with a human rights perspective, which would ensure that judgments complied with international standards and applied a trauma-informed approach, and a risk measurement tool that would allow municipal judges to identify and forestall the risk of femicide in domestic violence cases.

37. The Supreme Court had recently issued 25 judgments citing the Convention and 37 judgments citing the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women. Specialized court judges were expected to apply those conventions in their decisions.

38. **Ms. Schläppi** said that she wished to know what the State Party would do to safeguard the institutional and financial capacity of the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of

Women, thereby ensuring its ability to fulfil its mandate. She would welcome information on the outcome of the assessment of the National Equality Plan for the period 2021–2025. It would be interesting to know whether a new national equality plan would be developed and, if so, what it would prioritize. It would be useful to learn how the State Party ensured that women's needs were taken into account in national budget allocations for all areas of policy and what mechanisms were in place to guarantee the participation of women's organizations in the design, implementation and monitoring of gender equality policies. She wondered what measures were taken to ensure that the Legislative Assembly took into account the gender equality perspective when drafting new laws.

39. She would like to know what measures would be taken to strengthen the capacity and independence of the Office of the Human Rights Advocate, how the Office monitored human rights violations in the state of exception currently in force and what actions it had taken to promote gender equality and protect women detainees and their families. She would welcome an explanation of the Government's understanding of the concept of temporary special measures. Did it plan to adopt any time-bound, targeted measures relating to areas other than those mentioned in the State Party's report?

40. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women did not act as an isolated entity but as a lead technical agency with the inter-institutional capacity to direct, monitor and evaluate the implementation of plans and policies, including the National Equality Plan and the National Policy on Access to a Life Free from Violence for Women. Intersectoral coordination was undertaken to optimize the use of resources and thereby increase the quality and coverage of services for women. For example, the seven specialized centres for women and the eight specialized support centres facilitated women's access to specialized care and services provided by a broader network of centres across the country. Within that framework, the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women implemented a mechanism that brought specialized legal, psychological, social and health services closer to communities. The Institute provided services in conjunction with other government institutions and private companies, guaranteeing the quality of services for women nationwide.

41. **A representative of El Salvador** said that a number of institutional and municipal guidelines had been implemented to mainstream the principles of equality and non-discrimination and to ensure a life free from violence for women. The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women was committed to supporting public institutions and municipalities in their efforts to promote and protect the rights of women. In that connection, the Institute had undertaken more than 1,300 consultations on public policy with 97 institutions and had conducted training and awareness-raising campaigns on women's rights that had reached over 37,000 civil servants.

42. Following the mid-term evaluation of the National Equality Plan, a final evaluation was now being conducted. That process involved monitoring 48 indicators grouped into thematic areas corresponding to financial autonomy; care and social protection for women; access to and retention in education for girls and young women; comprehensive healthcare; women's political participation; the eradication of violence against women; and mechanisms for mainstreaming the principles of equality, non-discrimination and the eradication of violence against women in public administration. Key achievements identified in the evaluation included the improvement of the ranking of El Salvador in the gender inequality index and a significant fall in the rate of femicide. Furthermore, greater numbers of women owned homes, had careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and occupied posts within ministries. The early pregnancy rate had also fallen significantly.

43. **A representative of El Salvador** said that budget cuts and institutional reforms were being undertaken to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of the State. In that connection, steps were being taken to modernize the State by eliminating administrative fragmentation, reducing bureaucracy and avoiding the duplication of efforts within State agencies. The Government had identified a number of agencies whose work overlapped with that of other agencies or spent disproportionate amounts on renting offices, paying salaries and other matters.

44. Certain bureaucratic procedures were being eliminated so that benefits could be provided to recipients in a direct and timely manner. The fact that certain parliamentary committees had been wound down did not mean that their mandates were being neglected. Matters relating to human rights were addressed in a cross-cutting manner by all the committees within the Legislative Assembly.

45. Resources had been optimized and redirected, improving the benefits and cash transfers allocated to the public and ensuring that budgetary resources were invested in permanent public services rather than short-term programmes or projects. In short, the process of institutional modernization involved moving from a system that spent heavily on bureaucracy to one in which expenditure was directed towards the people of El Salvador.

46. Despite the budgetary restructuring, the Office of the Human Rights Advocate had made significant progress in recent years, having specialized its staff, implemented technical protocols and modernized its service channels. Furthermore, a number of specialized departments and offices had been established, including a deputy advocate's office for defending the rights of migrants and ensuring citizen safety, a department responsible for assisting migrants and displaced persons, a deputy advocate's office for the defence of women's rights and the family and a specialized unit for supporting women victims of violence. A number of protocols and technical guidelines based on the international commitments of El Salvador were being implemented, including a protocol on migrants, a protocol on femicide and an institutional policy on equality and non-discrimination for the period 2025–2029.

47. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the Directorate General of Prisons and the Office of the Human Rights Advocate had established an inter-agency committee to jointly monitor the conditions of detention of all persons deprived of their liberty. In 2025, the two agencies had carried out joint visits to prisons, including detention centres for women, to monitor the food, healthcare and other services provided to inmates. The inter-agency committee had made it possible to respond to complaints filed by relatives of persons deprived of their liberty. The Office of the Human Rights Advocate had received around 18,000 complaints of human rights violations and had determined that no violation had occurred in any of those cases.

48. **Ms. Schläppi** said that it was still not clear whether any plans were in place to develop a new national equality plan and, if so, what the plan would prioritize.

49. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women monitored and advised State institutions in order to support their efforts to protect women's rights and promote gender equality. State institutions and representatives of civil society had participated in the evaluation of the National Equality Plan for the period 2021–2025, and a new plan would be drawn up. The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women had expanded and diversified its services, particularly at the community level. Although a number of offices were closing, the Institute's staff were now going out into the field to assist women living in remote areas.

50. **Ms. Tisheva** said that she wished to know what measures were being taken to change traditional cultural patterns and eliminate gender stereotypes, including the notion that women should bear primary responsibility for caregiving and domestic work and should be obedient to men's authority. She wondered how the State Party involved the media, civil society organizations, teachers, religious and community leaders and other relevant actors in awareness-raising and educational campaigns relating to gender stereotypes.

51. It would be useful to know which State institutions were responsible for tackling gender stereotyping and what measures were taken, besides initiating criminal proceedings, to respond to online gender-based violence, cyberharassment and hate speech against women, including women journalists, human rights defenders and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women. In considering that question, the delegation might provide information about preventive measures, awareness-raising campaigns, support for victims and any relevant training provided to police officers and justice officials.

52. She would be grateful for information on any steps being taken to reduce levels of impunity in cases of gender-based violence, to strengthen investigations and prosecutions

relating to that offence and to rebuild women's trust in law enforcement and justice institutions. She wondered how the authorities responded to cases of gender-based violence in which members of the police or the security forces were involved.

53. She would welcome data on the availability, geographical coverage, accessibility and capacity of shelters and specialized support services for victims of different forms of violence. It would be useful to know whether victims of violence had access to psychological support, including trauma counselling and rehabilitation services. Would the State Party consider undertaking multisectoral, in-depth reviews of cases of femicide in order to determine how to improve responses to gender-based violence?

54. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen** said that she would welcome information on the current status, duration and scope of the National Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons. She wondered whether civil society had participated in the design of the Plan and whether any mechanisms were in place to monitor and evaluate its implementation and effectiveness. She wished to know whether persons arrested and detained under the state of exception were routinely screened to determine whether they were victims of trafficking and whether any safeguards were in place to prevent trafficking victims from being misidentified as criminals or detained without access to protection and support. It would be interesting to learn whether victims of trafficking were given the opportunity to inform the authorities about their status as victims.

55. She would be grateful for information on the budgetary funds allocated to victim support services, including shelters, healthcare and legal aid, and on protocols for assessing the quality of such services. She would like to know how the State Party ensured that the provision of support for victims was not conditional on their cooperation. She would be interested to hear about any recent measures taken to strengthen the capacity of the authorities to investigate reports of trafficking and bring prosecutions against the perpetrators.

56. She would appreciate details of any steps being taken to identify, evaluate and tackle obstacles that hindered anti-trafficking activities, including challenges within the law enforcement services and the justice system and barriers to the effective investigation and prosecution of perpetrators. In the absence of a legal framework regulating prostitution, how did the State Party ensure that women sex workers were protected from exploitation and trafficking and could report abuse without fear of being criminalized or subjected to reprisals?

57. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the Government considered trafficking in persons to be a serious violation of human rights and had designed comprehensive plans, projects and mechanisms for tackling the offence, including the "Open Arms" (Brazos Abiertos) plan. In El Salvador, the response to trafficking in persons had been radically transformed from a reactive approach to a proactive, technological and multidimensional approach. In line with its zero-tolerance policy, the State not only prosecuted perpetrators of trafficking but also dismantled the financial and digital systems that sustained exploitation networks.

58. A regional centre was equipped to provide comprehensive care to victims of trafficking, including psychosocial support and healthcare. Preventive measures were taken by a broad range of State agencies, including the Counsel General's Office and the Office of the Human Rights Advocate. In accordance with an annual plan, visits were conducted to places where sex workers operated to identify possible victims of trafficking. The law enforcement services did not become involved in any case of trafficking until it had been established that an offence had been committed. Protocols were in place for referring cases of trafficking to the Attorney General's Office and then to the courts. Victims were allocated legal assistance by the Counsel General's Office.

59. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the Counsel General's Office formed part of the Public Legal Service and was independent of the executive and legislative branches. The Office provided psychological and psychosocial support as well as legal services to persons in vulnerable situations. The Specialized Prosecutor's Office for Women supported women victims of domestic violence, including by providing them with legal representation, while the Specialized Prosecutor's Office for the Family addressed matters relating to maintenance payments and situations of economic violence. The Counsel General's Office

also worked to protect women's labour rights and civil rights, including their right to property. The Specialized Prosecutor's Office of Persons in Vulnerable Situations provided support to older persons, persons with disabilities and members of the Indigenous Peoples, among other groups.

60. In El Salvador, women's dignity was non-negotiable, and the Counsel General's Office made efforts to eliminate harmful gender stereotypes from all areas of society. In that connection, a specialized prosecutor's office attached to the Counsel General's Office coordinated mechanisms for mainstreaming the principle of equality and non-discrimination and the right to a life free from violence for women.

61. The Counsel General's Office had established a standing committee through which it held dialogues with women leaders and women's organizations with a view to identifying structural barriers to justice. That forum was subject to internal regulations and observed the requirements established in the Special Comprehensive Act on a Violence-Free Life for Women.

62. The Act on Equality, Equity and the Elimination of Discrimination against Women strengthened institutional due diligence and accountability from a human rights perspective. The Act provided for a cross-cutting approach to women's human rights, equality, non-discrimination and intersectionality and made it possible for the Counsel General's Office to identify specific vulnerabilities and implement differentiated responses.

63. The Office used specialized tools and procedures for the referral of cases. A programme had been established to provide short-, medium- and long-term legal and psychosocial assistance to the families of victims of femicide. That initiative was supported by the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women, the National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence, and the Attorney General's Office, among other institutions. To date, communication had been established with 24 families with a view to providing them with assistance.

64. The Counsel General's Office had cooperated with other institutions to create tools for maintaining reliable records. As part of those efforts, the Office had created an early warning module that would be used to process information on cases of violence in order to determine the level of risk faced by women and request measures to protect them and their families. The module would make it possible to keep records of protective measures and to monitor data on victims and aggressors and would serve as a tool for institutions involved in providing comprehensive support to women.

65. **A representative of El Salvador** said that deeply rooted sociocultural beliefs were a factor in violence and discrimination against women. Alongside the application of criminal sanctions for violence and discrimination, El Salvador was transforming the cultural and institutional structures that normalized such acts. To help reduce inequality and discrimination, specialized training and awareness-raising were provided to public servants from the institutions responsible for implementing the legal framework on equality. Since 2022, 18,717 women and 14,757 men had received that training.

66. **A representative of El Salvador** said that partnerships were being developed with the private sector to employ and support survivors of trafficking in persons, and that the response to trafficking was proactive and multidimensional.

67. The National Council against Trafficking in Persons ensured synergy between prevention and prosecution. A central pillar of the national model was proactive and specialized identification, with first responders thoroughly trained in detecting indicators of trafficking and avoiding wrongly identifying victims as irregular migrants or offenders. Outreach was conducted in schools and communities, and the cybercrime team of the National Civil Police monitored social networks. Digital security modules had been integrated into the school curriculum and the National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence carried out operations to identify minors at risk.

68. Given that trafficking was often carried out by organized criminal networks, efforts to combat organized crime had increased and incorporated asset-freezing and specialized investigative techniques.

69. The national network for assisting victims ensured privacy and comprehensive support. Secure shelters were available in undisclosed locations and the National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence ran specialized facilities for girls and adolescents. Consular assistance in Mexico and the United States of America had been standardized, and programmes had been put in place to support victims to develop economic autonomy.

70. **A representative of El Salvador** said that the country closely followed the Committee's recommendations, in particular general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice. Solid jurisprudence had been developed in both specialized and ordinary courts, addressing the prejudices and cultural beliefs held by judicial actors with regard to victims' behaviour, credibility, testimony or resistance in cases of sexual violence, as well as assumptions about consent, that led to revictimization, victim-blaming and a distorted evaluation of evidence.

71. At the twenty-second Ibero-American Judicial Summit, held in the Dominican Republic in May 2025, El Salvador had received an award for the promotion of gender equality through judicial decisions.

72. Collective trials and detentions were not based on indiscriminate, unrestricted collective charges, but rather were used as a means of allowing the Public Prosecution Service to file charges against persons for membership of designated terrorist organizations. Due process and fair trial rights were fully respected. Defendants had access to counsel of their choosing and also to public counsel provided for free by the Office of the Counsel General. They could hold meetings with their counsel by videoconference or in spaces specially designed for confidential discussions.

73. **Ms. Toledo Vásquez** said that she wondered whether the early warning module that was under development would include information on convictions, for example in cases of violence, given that, according to the information that the Committee had received, the conviction rate was low.

74. In addition to the criminal responses required in cases of femicide and the support provided to families, some countries carried out in-depth multisectoral reviews of femicide cases to learn how to improve coordination in order to prevent such cases in the future. She wondered whether El Salvador was considering taking such an approach.

75. **Ms. Tisheva** said that she would be grateful for responses to her questions on training on gender stereotypes. She would like to know how the media, teachers, local communities, religious leaders, prosecutor's offices and governmental institutions, as well as men and boys, were involved in such training.

76. She wanted to know whether hate speech against groups of women such as journalists, human rights defenders and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women was criminalized and what other measures, beyond criminalization, the State Party was taking to combat hate speech.

77. She would appreciate receiving data on the availability, geographical coverage and accessibility of shelters and specialized support services for women who had experienced gender-based violence.

78. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen** said that it was unclear how the authorities could be sure that the 27 victims of trafficking reportedly identified by the State Party in 2024 accounted for all such victims that year. It would be interesting to know what measures were in place to identify all victims.

79. **A representative of El Salvador** said that specialized training had been developed with institutions, private companies and civil society throughout the country. Some courses were designed for men and women to participate together; others were specifically for women or for men, such as those on violence prevention, addressing gender-based stereotypes and the link between such stereotypes and violence. Specific training had also been designed for journalists and advertising professionals to prevent the perpetuation of gender-based stereotypes and of depictions of symbolic violence in the media. The training

courses, which were of varying length, were conducted both online and in person throughout the country.

80. **A representative of El Salvador** said that trafficking in persons was primarily addressed through prevention. Periodic operations were conducted to identify women and girls at risk. The authorities were studying the links between trafficking in persons and children living in street situations. Support and training had been provided by the Government of the United States to the multidisciplinary teams of the National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence and other entities on identifying persons at risk of trafficking during interviews.

81. Cooperation with the General Directorate for Migration and Foreign Nationals had enabled the National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence to deploy more than 44 teams nationwide, facilitating early warnings and helping to distinguish between victims and traffickers. Coordination with the Ministry of Tourism and the provision of training for staff in hotels, restaurants and tourist sites had also aided detection of trafficking, supported by close cooperation with embassies when cases were identified.

82. El Salvador was confident in the accuracy of the number of cases reported because training and capacity-building had improved officials' ability to identify victims and traffickers. The data presented had been provided by the National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence.

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83. **Ms. Barriteau** said that the Committee was concerned that women remained underrepresented in decision-making positions at the ministerial and municipal levels. She would like to know what measures had been adopted to ensure the effective implementation of quotas, including placement mandates, enforcement mechanisms and sanctions for non-compliance, to address the structural conditions limiting women's advancement in such positions. She would also like to know how the State Party intended to move towards parity in the Legislative Assembly and all decision-making positions, including in the judiciary. It would be interesting to have information on any measures or mechanisms that existed to address the structural barriers to participating in political and public life experienced by rural, Indigenous and Afrodescendent women, women with disabilities and older women.

84. She wondered what percentage of high-level diplomatic positions, such as ambassadors or senior consular officers, were held by women.

85. Lastly, she asked for information on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies to prevent political violence against women, including training of electoral authorities, political parties, law enforcement officials and the judiciary. She also asked how the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly's Commission on Women and Gender Equality had affected the advancement of women's rights and women's participation in legislative processes and what mechanisms had replaced its oversight functions.

86. **Ms. Reddock** said that she would like to know how the State Party ensured that all Salvadoran women, including women who lacked access to documentation, women in rural areas or migrant settlements, internally displaced women and women deprived of their liberty, were able to register and transmit their nationality to their children, including children whose births were not registered on time and children born abroad, to prevent situations of statelessness.

87. Given that lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women did not have the right to pass on their citizenship to adopted children, she wondered how it was ensured that all children in the State Party had equal rights to citizenship. The delegation might provide information on any mechanisms in place to address the physical and administrative barriers faced by rural and Indigenous women and their children to accessing identification documents and on whether the reduction of the time period for birth registration from 90 to 45 days had affected such access.

88. The Committee would appreciate an update on the impact and status of the project to provide mobile biometric devices and information on whether it had improved rural women's

access to identity documents and services and on whether the project encompassed mechanisms to protect citizens' private information.

89. **A representative of El Salvador** said that El Salvador had moved from viewing women's political participation as a numerical quota to be fulfilled to recognizing it as essential to democratic legitimacy. The Supreme Electoral Court verified that parties had fulfilled the quota of 30 per cent for women on their lists before allowing them to register for elections. Political participation was supported through universal design and an intersectional approach. Materials were produced in the Nahuatl language and in formats accessible for persons with visual disabilities and efforts were made to facilitate voting by Indigenous women, women with disabilities and women living abroad.

90. Violence remained the main barrier to women's political leadership. A mandatory reporting mechanism had been established that ensured protection from revictimization, and the Supreme Electoral Court could issue immediate interim measures in the case of hate campaigns or online or symbolic violence.

91. The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women promoted women's political participation through various means, including inter-institutional coordination and the provision of practical tools for institutions and political parties. Training, assistance and prevention measures had been implemented to ensure that women could participate in the public sphere on an equal footing throughout the country, supported by monitoring systems and disaggregated data that allowed for the identification of gaps in different parts of El Salvador and the design of targeted affirmative actions in response. Transparency in the composition of electoral bodies allowed for the monitoring of the participation of women throughout the political process.

92. **A representative of El Salvador** said that women represented nearly half of the diplomatic and administrative workforce in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and two deputy ministers were women. Women held 42.22% of leadership posts in embassies and permanent missions, and 43.14% of consular leadership positions. All government institutions were required by law to have a gender affairs office.

93. Breastfeeding rooms were available in most Salvadoran embassies and consulates worldwide, for both staff and visitors. Childcare was also provided for staff working in consulates. The criteria for decisions on promotions and evaluations were based purely on merit and competence and no applicant would be penalized for having taken parental leave.

94. The procedure for registering children born abroad had been modernized and consular and embassy staff were fully trained in processing such registrations. The registration procedure was free and could be done from abroad using an online platform.

95. Many requests for Salvadoran nationality had been received from adults who had been born abroad or granted another nationality at birth. The relevant procedures were facilitated irrespective of the country of residence.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.