



# International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

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## Committee on Enforced Disappearances

### Twenty-ninth session

#### Summary record of the 544th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 24 September 2025, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. de Frouville (Vice-Chair)

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*Mr. de Frouville (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.*

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

**Consideration of reports of States Parties under article 29 (1) of the Convention**

*(continued)*

*Initial report of Benin (continued) (CED/C/BEN/1; CED/C/BEN/Q/1; CED/C/BEN/RQ/1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Benin joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair**, welcoming the head of delegation and the Permanent Representative of Benin to the meeting, said that other members of the delegation would be participating via video link.
3. **Mr. Diop** (Country Rapporteur) said that he wished to know under exactly which provisions of national law it was prohibited to expel, return (“*refouler*”), surrender or extradite a person to another State where there were substantial grounds for believing that he or she would be in danger of being subjected to enforced disappearance. He wished to know, too, which administrative or judicial authorities issued expulsion or return orders, who – the person ordered expelled or a member of his or her family, for example – could appeal against such orders, which administrative agency considered the appeal and whether the execution of the order was suspended during the consideration of the appeal. In that connection, it would be helpful to learn whether it was also possible to petition the courts for the revocation of an expulsion or other such order.
4. He would welcome further information on the procedure for the consideration of extradition requests received by the State Party. It would be interesting to know, for example, whether it was an administrative or judicial procedure. He would also welcome more information on the new registers of persons deprived of their liberty that had been mentioned at the previous meeting. In particular, he wondered whether the new registers had replaced older registers and, if so, which ones. He wondered, too, whether they were electronic, whether they were already being used and whether they made or would make it possible to follow a detainee’s progress from the moment he or she was taken into custody.
5. More information about police custody would also be welcome. He wished to know, for instance, under what laws it was regulated, how long a person could remain in the custody of the police, whether the maximum period was unvarying regardless of the offence for which the person was being held, whether the period could be renewed and, if so, how many times and by which authority. It would be useful to know at what point a person in police custody could contact his or her legal representative or family members, whether foreign nationals in police custody had access to the consular authorities of their country and whether the relevant consular authorities were informed of the detention of their compatriots.
6. He wondered which public authorities could visit places of deprivation of liberty and whether civil society organizations active in the field of human rights had unrestricted access to such places. He wondered, too, whether the prohibitions on visits that had been put in place for public health reasons during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had been fully lifted.
7. **Mr. Albán-Alencastro** (Country Rapporteur) said that he wished to know what measures the State Party was taking to prevent and investigate disappearances relating to trafficking in persons, in particular in its tri-border areas. He also wished to know what measures it was taking or had planned to protect its nationals abroad from trafficking in persons and the associated risk of disappearance, whether there were any cross-border cooperation protocols to combat trafficking in persons and why, despite reports of persistent risk, efforts to investigate cases of trafficking were flagging and victim services, including shelters, legal aid and psychological support, were being cut or were no longer a priority. It would be helpful to learn whether there was a national strategy to improve the situation and ensure that trafficking victims had the support they needed.
8. He would welcome further information on the early warning system and the West African Police Information System, which, according to the replies of the State Party to the

list of issues ([CED/C/BEN/RQ/1](#)), were the emergency systems put in place to ensure that urgent searches were launched when a disappearance was reported. He wondered, for example, how those systems were activated and whether civil society organizations or the general public had access to them and could trigger an urgent search for a person who had disappeared.

9. He wished to know what specific measures the State Party was taking in response to a reported recent increase in the number of people abducted by non-State armed groups operating in the north of its territory. In view of that situation, it would be helpful to learn what safeguards were in place to ensure that innocent civilians were not subjected to enforced disappearance in the context of the State Party's counter-terror operations, whether members of the Fulani community were disproportionately affected by those operations and, if so, what the State Party was doing to make certain that its efforts to fight terrorism did not lead to violations of the rights of its ethnic minorities.

10. As it was noted in the State Party's replies to the list of issues that anyone who suffered harm as a result of a criminal offence could seek compensation, it would be helpful to learn exactly what victims or their family members had to do to obtain such compensation. It would be helpful, too, to learn whether provision had been made for forms of reparation such as measures of satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition, what mechanisms were in place to ensure that victims of enforced disappearance could exercise their right to know the truth about the circumstances of the disappearance and the fate of the disappeared person and to what extent those circumstances were made known to the public at large. A description of any mechanisms that had been created to allow the family members of a person subjected to enforced disappearance to participate actively in search and investigation processes would likewise be welcome.

11. He wondered whether the modules on the Convention mentioned in the replies to the list of issues had been integrated into the training curricula for actors in the justice system and what particular topics would be covered in those modules. How did the State Party intend to assess the effectiveness of its training programmes?

12. It would be interesting to learn whether there had been any campaigns to raise awareness of the Convention, especially in the areas of the State Party affected by the activities of non-State armed groups. In particular, he wished to know whether people living in those areas were aware of what they would need to do to initiate searches and investigations and of the right of victims of enforced disappearance to reparations.

13. As the State Party apparently had no plans to ensure that the acts listed in article 25 (1) (a) and (b) of the Convention constituted criminal offences in their own right, he wished to know how it would strengthen the legal framework for the prevention and punishment of illegal adoption, the wrongful removal of children, the theft of their identity or their recruitment by armed groups. He also wished to know what the procedure was for annulling illegal adoptions or guardianship arrangements and whether there were any mechanisms to ensure that the victims of those practices could learn what had happened to them and obtain reparation.

14. He wondered what steps the State Party took to ensure that civil society organizations could freely support the victims of enforced disappearance, trafficking in persons and people smuggling. He wondered, too, whether there were any current limits on the freedoms of expression and association and, if so, whether those limits had an adverse effect on the ability of victims of enforced disappearance or their representative organizations to assert their rights. Lastly, he wished to know whether the Government invited civil society organizations and victims' associations to participate in the formulation of policies on migration, trafficking in persons, people smuggling and human rights in general.

15. **The Chair**, noting that the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism had expressed concern about the often lengthy delays in transferring suspects detained in the State Party's far north to Cotonou and about the decree under which the prison authorities could subject persons deprived of their liberty to prolonged solitary confinement, said that he wished to know what plans had been made to address those situations. In view of the effectiveness of birth

registration as a measure to prevent the wrongful removal of children, he wondered what was done to ensure that all births in the State Party were registered without delay.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.35 a.m. and resumed at 10.55 a.m.*

16. **A representative of Benin** said that, by law, no one could be returned to a country where his or her life might be in danger. Expulsion orders were administrative measures taken by the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security. Anyone ordered to leave the country could submit an appeal, which had suspensive effect, to the National Commission for Refugees and Stateless Persons.

17. The single register of persons deprived of their liberty would replace a number of older registers. It would function electronically and would ensure traceability of detainees from the time of arrest.

18. **A representative of Benin** said that the consideration of extradition requests was a judicial procedure in which due process was followed. The procedure involved the Principal State Prosecutor, the Investigation Chamber of the Court of Appeal and the Minister of Justice and Legislation, who could refer the Court's opinion to the Council of Ministers for the issuance of the decree authorizing the extradition.

19. A person in police custody had to be brought before a public prosecutor within 48 hours of being taken into custody. The prosecutor decided whether the person should remain in custody or be released. Upon arrest, all persons were informed of their rights, including the right to contact a family member.

20. **A representative of Benin** said that the rules for visits to the country's prisons by the judicial authorities were set out in the Code of Criminal Procedure. What was more, all natural or legal persons who were permitted to visit places of deprivation of liberty under the international instruments to which his country was a party had the right to visit all such places. Human rights organizations and officials, including the Benin Human Rights Commission, the Ombudsperson and all non-governmental organizations authorized to visit places of deprivation of liberty, had had access to the country's prisons since the lifting of the public health measures that had been taken during the pandemic.

21. There were two types of solitary confinement under Decree No. 2024-1153 on the internal organization of prisons. One, ordered by a court, involved placing prisoners in solitary confinement to prevent them from tampering with evidence or otherwise interfering with an ongoing investigation, whereas the other, in which prisoners were isolated for their own protection or for the protection of others, followed a decision made by prison officials. In neither case, however, was solitary confinement used as a means of punishment.

22. **A representative of Benin** said that all necessary arrangements had been made to ensure that law enforcement and other agencies in her country cooperated effectively with their counterparts abroad. The specialized units in Benin that operated around the clock took the necessary steps to ensure that the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) issued the relevant alerts, known as Yellow Notices, when they received reports of missing persons. Orange Notices, which were issued to warn of serious and imminent threats to public safety, were another effective tool.

23. Her country had ratified a number of international instruments related to trafficking in persons, a phenomenon it was firmly committed to combating. The robust legal and institutional framework it had developed to clamp down on traffickers, who could be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison, was yet more evidence of its commitment. Children were afforded special protection under a 2006 law in which the conditions for the movement of minors and the suppression of trafficking in children in Benin had been set out.

24. **A representative of Benin** said that, in accordance with article 204 of the Children's Code, no child was allowed to join the armed forces or an armed group. At first glance, it might seem that there was no legally provided punishment for violations of that article, but in fact the recruitment of children by armed groups, as a practice similar to slavery, could be considered a crime against humanity under article 464 of the Criminal Code or, at the very least, a form of trafficking in persons under articles 499–504 and would thus not go unpunished.

25. Adoptions were not annulled in Benin, but if, for example, what was known as simple adoption was shown to have taken place as a result of a case of enforced disappearance, the decision to authorize it could be revoked. Decisions to authorize full adoptions, in which the child's ties with his or her biological parents were severed, were irrevocable. It was nonetheless still possible to bring proceedings for judicial review of the adoption decision.

26. **A representative of the Benin Human Rights Commission, Benin**, said that the Commission, his country's independent national human rights institution, made every effort to ensure that, as prescribed in the Constitution, no one remained in police custody for more than 48 hours without the consent of a judicial authority and that the period of such custody in no case exceeded eight days. The offences for which the 48-hour period could be renewed were set out in article 61 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. On the whole, the constitutional and other requirements relating to police custody were followed.

27. If, during its visits to places of detention, the Commission found that prisoners were spending longer in solitary confinement than was permitted under the relevant decrees, it drew the attention of the prison authorities to the situation and ensured that the issue was resolved on the spot. In principle, non-profit and civil society organizations were entitled to visit the country's prisons. If they encountered resistance from the prison authorities, however, they could turn to the Commission, which would intercede on their behalf and thus facilitate the visits they wished to undertake.

28. **A representative of Benin** said that only law enforcement officials, not the general public, had access to the emergency systems – the West African Police Information System, for example – that were in place to ensure the launch of urgent searches.

29. **A representative of Benin** said that all judicial, law enforcement and prison authorities had access to the single register of persons deprived of their liberty, which had been introduced on 1 January 2025. There was an interface that made it possible for officials at the Ministry of Justice and Legislation to review all sanctions involving deprivation of liberty.

30. Despite what the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism might have suggested in his recent report on his visit to Benin ([A/HRC/58/47/Add.1](#)), the criminal justice authorities could not extend the period of police custody beyond what was provided by law. Solitary confinement, as had been noted, was not used as a disciplinary measure. The disciplinary measures taken in the country's prisons were fully compatible with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).

31. A person in police custody had the right to the assistance of counsel as soon as he or she was taken into custody. The prisons, as had been suggested, were regularly visited by a wide range of judicial and ministerial authorities, as well as by civil society organizations.

32. Terrorism in his country was the result of incursions by armed groups operating chiefly in neighbouring countries. Bandits, too, made incursions into Benin. There was, in addition, internal conflict, often pitting one ethnic group against another in a struggle over land rights. Persons detained against the backdrop of efforts to combat terrorism and other forms of crime in the north were transferred first to Parakou and then to Cotonou. The total distance was around 900 km. Only in a small handful of instances, however, when transport had been in short supply, had it taken longer than eight days to complete a transfer.

33. The Government had allocated additional financial, human and material resources to the criminal investigation police in response to the concerns raised by the Special Rapporteur. The relevant specialized unit had been expanded and provided with offices in the south, centre and north of the country, which would facilitate custody and transfer and expedite the prosecution of suspects in terrorism and organized crime cases. Suspects who were arrested in the north and brought before the Court for the Repression of Economic Offences and Terrorism or detained in prisons in the south were not isolated: they received regular visits from their relatives and support from their communities and associations that worked with the Government.

34. Victims of enforced disappearance – understood as the community of the person who had disappeared – were not directly involved in investigations. Under the Code of Criminal

Procedure, only the criminal investigation police and the judiciary could conduct and manage investigations. However, organizations could provide information, and the investigating authorities could share information with them and seek their input and advice. Some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had worked with the authorities on the search for certain individuals, especially in the context of land disputes.

35. Three years previously, the institutional framework for the protection of minors had been strengthened with the establishment of children's divisions within the courts of first instance. Composed of two judges and a child protection officer, children's divisions settled matters relating to children, working with society to obtain and verify relevant information. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance had specific departments that provided social, psychological and medical care and assistance for minors. The Government consulted local communities on a range of issues relevant to children, including respect for their rights, a practice that helped to inform its policies on children and child protection. The Government was working to curb a trend for minors to leave the country in search of opportunities abroad.

36. In terms of awareness-raising on the Convention, the Ministry of Justice and Legislation was setting up a digital repository to support the dissemination of laws, including the Convention. It was also necessary to integrate concepts related to enforced disappearance into the training of criminal investigation officers, judges and prosecutors. The judicial training college was conducting a review of training curricula and would soon publish its annual training calendar, taking into account requests by justice officials for training on particular issues.

37. NGOs in Benin were fully involved in the formulation of human rights policies. They engaged with the Government and participated in discussions and reporting on various issues. The Government did not impose any restrictions on the freedoms of expression and assembly. NGOs were fully entitled to submit complaints and to approach law enforcement authorities to assert the legitimate rights of anyone who requested their support.

38. In September 2025, automatic birth registration services had been extended to all public health facilities. Registration was carried out by the National Agency for the Identification of Persons, which also issued birth certificates.

39. **Mr. Diop** said he would be grateful if the delegation could confirm that the State Party's expulsion procedure was purely administrative and that the administrative authority had the final word on expulsion decisions. He wondered whether the Government recognized the need for a judicial remedy in order to ensure the legality of expulsion decisions.

40. He noted with concern that police custody could last up to eight days, whereas in most countries it was limited to 24 or 48 hours, with short extensions in cases involving specific offences such as terrorism or drug trafficking. He would be interested to know whether persons taken into custody were brought before an investigating judge, whether they were informed of their rights, including the right to counsel and the right of defence, and, if so, how such information was provided. It would be useful to know whether persons of limited means had access to a court-appointed lawyer and whether the police were obliged to allow persons taken into custody to make a telephone call to a lawyer or relative.

41. He would also appreciate clarification of whether extradition decisions issued by the Court of Appeal were subject to appeal to the Supreme Court or the Constitutional Court, or were simply forwarded to the relevant authority for the adoption of the extradition decree.

42. **Mr. Albán-Alencastro** said that he would be interested to know whether the Beninese authorities effectively assessed whether persons due to be returned to other States were at risk of enforced disappearance and, if so, what criteria they used for that assessment. He would like to know whether the police, upon taking a foreign national into custody, would contact his or her consulate and, more broadly, whether foreign nationals deprived of their liberty had regular communication with their consular representatives in accordance with international standards. Further details concerning the specific measures that were being taken to prevent trafficking cases and the institutions responsible for preventing and combating trafficking in persons, particularly trafficking in children, would be appreciated.

43. Although the delegation had suggested that the forced recruitment and use of children could be dealt with under articles 464 and 499–504 of the Criminal Code, those articles did

not strictly relate to forced recruitment; their application to punish an act of forced recruitment would thus be inconsistent with the principle of legality. As article 464, in particular, related to crimes against humanity, he wondered how the forced recruitment of children would be punished in cases that did not involve a widespread or systematic attack on a civilian population.

44. In the light of ongoing efforts to combat the activities of terrorist groups near the border with Nigeria, he wished to know what steps had been taken to protect persons belonging to ethnic minorities and other communities from enforced disappearances perpetrated by non-State actors. It would also be interesting to know how the State Party ensured that security forces engaging in counter-terrorism did not violate the rights of innocent persons. He would be grateful if the delegation could shed light on the specific mechanisms that were in place to protect communities from the terrorist threat, including the threat of enforced disappearance.

45. Additional information on how victims could participate in investigations and search processes, besides merely providing information to the authorities, would be welcome. It would be interesting to know, for example, whether the relatives of disappeared persons were permitted to be physically present during search activities.

46. The Committee would welcome the inclusion of content on enforced disappearance and the Convention in the curriculum of the judicial training college. He wondered whether similar training would be provided for other State officials, including members of the police, the armed forces and the Benin Human Rights Commission.

47. He would appreciate a response to his question concerning the historical problem of illegal adoptions, namely whether the State Party had established or planned to establish mechanisms to search for the truth and to provide reparations for affected families. He would like to know how the State Party ensured that civil society organizations that supported victims of enforced disappearance could carry out their activities freely and safely, and whether any obstacles prevented them from publicly making their cases and claims. To what extent did the Government consult civil society organizations and victims' groups during the formulation of public policies on relevant issues, such as trafficking in persons and migration?

48. **Ms. Villa Quintana** said that she would welcome further information about the conditions in which detainees were transferred from northern Benin to Cotonou. In particular, she wished to know which institutions were responsible for the transfers and whether the authorities had taken steps to prevent the enforced disappearance of detainees.

49. In addition, she would like to know whether the State Party had taken specific measures to combat trafficking in women and girls or applied a gender perspective or a differentiated approach in its anti-trafficking efforts. She wondered what mechanisms the State had established, besides the Act on the Prevention and Punishment of Violence against Women and Girls, to prevent the enforced disappearance of women.

50. **Mr. Diop** said that, when the State Party amended its criminal and civil laws, it would be well advised to make a clear distinction between missing persons and disappeared persons, as the two concepts related to different sets of circumstances.

51. **The Chair** said that he would be grateful for additional details concerning the provisions of Decree No. 2024-1153 on solitary confinement. Of particular interest to the Committee was the decree's compatibility with article 20 of the Convention, which laid down strict conditions for the restriction of the right of persons with a legitimate interest to information concerning a deprivation of liberty, and enshrined the right to a remedy as a means of obtaining such information. In short, he wished to know whether, during the solitary confinement of a person deprived of liberty, interested persons had effective access to information about the detention, whether their right to receive that information was subject to any restrictions, and whether they could exercise their right to a prompt and effective judicial remedy if the authorities refused to communicate the information.

52. While the Committee was grateful for the information on the legislation that the State Party had adopted, it would particularly appreciate details regarding practical measures that had been taken to give effect to the rights enshrined in the Convention. It would be interesting

to hear examples of the difficulties and obstacles the State Party had encountered in implementing national legislation, which would allow the Committee to formulate specific recommendations.

53. **Mr. Albán-Alencastro**, supported by **the Chair**, said that he would appreciate clarification regarding the different types of adoption and the circumstances under which adoptions could be revoked or annulled.

54. **A representative of Benin** said that Beninese law referred to revocation rather than annulment with regard to adoption. Only simple adoptions and intercountry adoptions could be revoked; full adoptions were irrevocable.

55. The Personal and Family Code had an article containing the legal definitions of “missing person” and “disappeared person”. The two concepts were thus already clearly distinguished in civil law, which recognized their consequences for inheritance and other rights.

56. Enforced disappearance, as defined in the Convention, was an altogether different concept. As noted at the preceding meeting, there was a need to amend the Criminal Code to bring it into conformity with the Convention by clearly criminalizing enforced disappearance not only as a crime against humanity but also as an offence against individual liberty.

57. Article 18 of the Constitution established that no one could be held in police custody for more than 48 hours except by decision of a judge and that the 48-hour time limit could be extended only in exceptional cases provided for by law. The offences that could give rise to the extension of police custody were set out in article 53 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and included economic and financial offences requiring complex investigations and offences relating to terrorism, drug trafficking and certain sexual offences. Police custody served simply to allow time to gather the initial evidence and conduct the initial interviews so that a case file could be submitted to the prosecutor. That, in turn, depended on the technical, financial and human resources made available to the criminal investigation police and other law enforcement agencies. Requests for information from a neighbouring country, for example, could take up to 30 days to be processed. However, the authorities did not wait for a response before referring a suspect to the public prosecutor. Legal proceedings could be initiated, in which case the prosecutor would decide whether to keep the person in custody.

58. Arrested persons had the right to consult a lawyer from the moment of their arrest and lawyers were permitted to inform third parties of their clients’ situation, unless aspects of the investigation were subject to confidentiality requirements. Thus, lawyers were authorized to notify the person’s family members or the consular authorities in the case of foreign nationals. Arrested persons were entitled to make specific requests that were recorded in police reports and could be checked by the judge at the time of the trial or at other stages of the proceedings.

59. The prison authorities drew up lists of detained foreign nationals that were distributed to their diplomatic and consular representatives. Requests for visits by consular representatives could be made via an online platform monitored by the national prison authorities and the judicial authorities. Appeals against extradition rulings could be filed with the Supreme Court within three days of the ruling and were heard by the judicial chamber of the Court. While expulsion orders were issued by administrative decision, judicial remedies with suspensive effect were available against such decisions.

60. In assessing whether foreign nationals might face a risk of enforced disappearance on being extradited or deported, the authorities considered the arguments put forward by the persons themselves and the information provided by the receiving State. All relevant information was checked by the authorities and transmitted to the State concerned so that its authorities had the opportunity to comment on it.

61. The Government had not received any reports of persons being abducted by terrorist groups. When abductions took place, they were generally linked to other offences, such as trafficking in persons, and were investigated by the criminal investigation police. Protection was afforded to all communities that required it. In search processes, local communities and authorities could participate by providing information but were not part of the official search and investigation system.

62. The Ministry of Justice organized cross-disciplinary training courses on enforced disappearance at the local level, in which police officers as well as justice officials took part. The Government acknowledged, however, that greater efforts must be made to raise awareness of the Convention and the notion of enforced disappearance. For example, the text of the Convention would need to be translated into local languages, as not everyone in Benin spoke French. Any assistance that the Committee could provide with that process would be very welcome.

63. At no point had any NGO been prevented from obtaining access to information on illegal adoptions, filing complaints or publishing information about victims. Although policies on combating enforced disappearance did not generally provide for gender-specific measures, a gender-based approach was sometimes taken in certain investigations. A specific institution had been established to provide counselling and legal assistance to women victims of sexual violence. The Bar Association had established a legal aid scheme to promote access to justice for persons of limited means.

64. **A representative of Benin** said that the Ministry of Justice conducted awareness-raising and training campaigns almost every year for actors involved in the fight against trafficking in persons, including local officials and tourism operators. A cohort of nearly 70 child ambassadors had received training in children's rights and duties. The Directorate for Human Rights also took measures to raise awareness of trafficking in persons. Officials had visited nearly 20 schools around the country to raise children's awareness of that phenomenon. The Central Office for the Repression of Cybercrime carried out online surveillance to detect trafficking activity and the National Institute for Women worked to protect the rights of women and girls.

65. The fight against trafficking involved agencies and mechanisms attached to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance, including one-stop social protection centres, technical departments and the Central Office for the Protection of Minors, the Family and the Repression of Human Trafficking. All of the courts and other judicial institutions were involved in the fight against trafficking, as were civil society organizations such as the West Africa Network for the Protection of Children. Children's reception and protection centres provided support to child victims of trafficking. The Children's Reception and Transit Centre of the Central Office for the Protection of Minors, the Family and the Repression of Human Trafficking provided shelter to victims of trafficking for up to three months. Under article 203 of the Children's Code, the use of children in armed conflict was considered to constitute child trafficking.

66. With regard to the different forms of adoption, children adopted under the simple adoption procedure retained a legal relationship with their family of origin, while the full adoption procedure entailed the complete rupture of such legal ties. Full adoption was subject to review in cases involving enforced disappearance.

67. **A representative of Benin** said that measures were taken to build the capacity of key actors involved in combating trafficking in persons, including criminal investigation officers, judges and court clerks. Capacity-building sessions involved civil society organizations, local elected officials, traditional leaders and religious leaders to ensure that information on trafficking was disseminated as widely as possible. Traditional and social media were used to raise awareness of measures to combat trafficking, including the adoption of relevant laws, with information being provided in the country's traditional languages. Border controls were being strengthened with a view to better identifying potential victims of trafficking.

68. Unannounced raids were conducted in bars, motels and other locations in order to identify victims of trafficking. The information gathered was used to dismantle criminal networks, which had a deterrent effect on potential traffickers. Online surveillance also focused on financial flows to detect traffickers and deprive them of their illicit income.

69. The Government had entered into a number of international, regional and bilateral agreements on combating trafficking in persons and was currently drafting an agreement with Kuwait, which was a destination country for migrants from Benin. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance provided assistance to vulnerable groups and subsidized activities for disadvantaged families with a view to tackling the root causes of trafficking in persons.

Local offices of the Central Office for the Protection of Minors, the Family and the Repression of Human Trafficking had been established in three of the country's departments.

70. **A representative of Benin** said that the members of the delegation had done their best to answer the Committee's questions and explain what the Government was doing to meet its obligations under the Convention. The delegation noted the Committee's recommendations and would draw on them in its efforts to combat enforced disappearance.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*