



Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Distr.: General
24 February 2026

Original: English

Committee against Torture Eighty-third session

Summary record of the 2219th meeting*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 18 November 2025, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Heller

Contents

Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 19 of the Convention
(*continued*)

Fourth periodic report of Bahrain

* No summary records were issued for the 2215th to 2218th meetings.

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.



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

Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 19 of the Convention *(continued)*

Fourth periodic report of Bahrain (CAT/C/BHR/4; CAT/C/BHR/QPR/4)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Bahrain joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Bahrain**, introducing his country's fourth periodic report (CAT/C/BHR/4), said that article 19 of the country's Constitution provided protections against torture and degrading treatment and prohibited detention in places that were not officially recognized as places of detention, while article 20 guaranteed judicial independence and the right of all defendants to a fair trial. Amendments to articles 208 and 232 of the Criminal Code had increased the penalties for torture, to which no statute of limitations applied. Places of detention must be monitored, and any allegations of ill-treatment investigated by the competent authorities. As judgments in criminal cases must be based on material and technical evidence, obtained in line with procedural safeguards, and not on confessions alone, the public prosecution had created a special department for the collection and analysis of evidence through the use of modern scientific methods.
3. Several royal pardons had been granted in recent years for a number of prisoners, with a view to promoting community rehabilitation. The country's alternative sentencing programme, launched in 2017, allowed for custodial sentences to be replaced with community-based restorative measures. Decree-Law No. 24 of 2001 had amended article 13 of the Criminal Code to expand eligibility for alternative sentencing. The country's open prisons programme helped prisoners maintain family and social ties. More than 9,500 persons had thus far received alternative penalties, of whom 300 had been placed in the open prisons programme, resulting in a recidivism rate of under 2.5 per cent. The open prisons programme was in line with strict international standards and had been accredited by the American Correctional Association in 2024.
4. The Ministry of the Interior continued to raise awareness of human rights through training sessions and its implementation of the Code of Conduct for Police Officers. A memorandum of understanding had been signed with the International Committee of the Red Cross, giving it access to correctional and rehabilitation centres and places of detention. In addition, the Royal Academy of Police had introduced higher education programmes on human rights and justice, in which 3,442 persons had participated since 2022.
5. The Special Investigation Unit played a key role in handling allegations of torture and ill-treatment. It had received and handled some 300 complaints over the previous five years. Since 2022, 23 cases, involving 36 defendants, had resulted in criminal convictions and disciplinary penalties.
6. All persons detained at correctional and rehabilitation centres received free healthcare services, the quality of which had improved since government hospitals had begun overseeing them in September 2022. Government hospitals had dedicated budgets for the provision of medical services to the prison population, which received the same quality of care as the general public.
7. Act No. 4 of 2021, on restorative justice for children and their protection from ill-treatment, had introduced special juvenile courts, which prioritized care and rehabilitation over punishment, and provided for age-appropriate alternative measures. Psychologists and social workers were involved at all stages of the judicial proceedings. Family and child protection offices had been established in police stations, and a unit had been created for the protection of children online. The public prosecution had created the Victim and Witness Protection Office, the Family Reconciliation Office and other special offices to implement the procedures provided for under the new laws on the protection and care of children and restorative justice measures. In December 2024, the Office of the Ombudsman had established a special division to investigate complaints from children between 15 and 18 years of age in correctional centres.

8. The National Institution for Human Rights, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Special Investigation Unit and the Prisoners' and Detainees' Rights Commission carried out both announced and unannounced visits to detention centres, monitored conditions of detention and received complaints, which they handled independently, impartially and in line with international standards. The Commission had carried out 10 visits, both announced and unannounced, to correctional and rehabilitation centres and places of detention between 2020 and 2025. Between 1 May 2021 and 30 April 2025, the Office of the Ombudsman had received 890 complaints and 1,657 requests for assistance, generally related to visits, communications or administrative matters, from inmates and their family members. The Office had resolved all of those requests.

9. The Jau Correctional and Rehabilitation Centre had been accredited by the American Correctional Association, having met all security, care, healthcare and administrative criteria. In 2025, Bahrain had ranked Tier 1 in the Trafficking in Persons Report released by the Department of State of the United States of America for the eighth consecutive year, the only country in the Middle East and North Africa to hold that distinction. With respect to the protection of journalists, Act No. 41 of 2025 had amended Decree-Law No. 47 of 2002, replacing custodial penalties with fines in cases related to publishing and prohibiting the pretrial detention of journalists in such cases. Within the criminal justice system, the number of offences for which conciliation was available had been expanded, and mediation had been codified as a means of dispute resolution. In an important step in the fight against domestic violence and violence against women, Act No. 7 of 2023 had repealed in its entirety article 353 of the Criminal Code, under which rapists had been exempted from punishment if they married their victims.

10. **Mr. Rouwane** (Country Rapporteur) said that the Committee was pleased to note that women comprised roughly half of the State Party's delegation. It welcomed the positive steps taken by the State Party, such as the legislative amendment pursuant to which torture was no longer considered a military crime, the adoption of the law on alternative penalties and the repeal of article 353 of the Criminal Code. However, it was concerned about the State Party's compliance with its obligations under articles 2 and 4 of the Convention. He wished to know to what extent the State Party's legislation provided for an absolute prohibition of torture and prohibited orders from superior officers from being invoked as a justification of torture, in line with article 2; to what extent acts of torture were punishable by appropriate penalties, as required by article 4 (2); and to what extent the forms of ill-treatment described in article 16 had been defined as criminal offences and carried appropriate penalties. He would also like to know whether the State Party planned to take any steps to bring its legislation into line with articles 2, 4 and 16 of the Convention.

11. He wondered whether there had been any cases since 2020 of persons being expelled, extradited or returned to countries where they were in danger of being subjected to torture. He would be grateful for information on extradition agreements and agreements for mutual legal assistance entered into by the State Party and on any unofficial arrangements for extradition with countries with which no official agreement was in place. He wished to know whether there were any official mechanisms for reviewing cases of refoulement, whether return decisions could be challenged when there were substantial grounds for believing that the person in question would be in danger of being subjected to torture, how the State Party determined whether there were such substantial grounds and whether persons facing expulsion or return were informed of their right to seek asylum. He would like to know what steps the State Party was taking to integrate the principles of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration into its legislation and whether it intended to ratify the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto. It would be helpful to have data on the number of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons who had been expelled or deported and information on the safeguards in place to ensure that such persons would not be at risk of torture or ill-treatment in their home countries. He wished to know what steps the State Party had taken to ensure that refugees had access to education and government services.

12. He wished to know what safeguards were in place to ensure that Act No. 58 of 2006, concerning the protection of society from terrorist acts, as amended, was not misused and what measures were taken to prevent the torture of suspects and provide fundamental legal

safeguards in that regard. He would be grateful if the delegation could comment on reports that, although the state of emergency declared following the events of 2011 had been lifted, its effects persisted, that civilians continued to be tried under laws permitting military involvement in security operations and that, in some cases, civilians had been detained at Al-Qurain Military Prison, where they had not been afforded fundamental legal safeguards to prevent torture and had faced an increased risk of being subjected to torture.

13. He wondered what measures had been taken to ensure respect for fundamental legal safeguards from the outset of deprivation of liberty and accountability for persons responsible for violations of those safeguards, in accordance with international standards. The delegation might wish to indicate any measures taken to ensure that interviews were always held in rooms equipped with audiovisual devices and what actions were taken against officials who did not comply with that requirement. In the light of paragraphs 18 and 19 of the Committee's previous concluding observations (CAT/C/BHR/CO/2-3), he wondered whether any legislative measures had been taken to amend article 147 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which allowed a lower court to impose pretrial detention for a period or for consecutive periods of up to 30 days in total, on condition that no one period exceeded 15 days, and whether the public prosecution could still submit requests to lower court judges for the issuance of a warrant for detention for up to 15 days beyond the initial 7 days, or for successive periods of up to 30 days in total.

14. The Committee encouraged the State Party to strengthen the competence and independence of national mechanisms for monitoring places of deprivation of liberty and handling complaints against the police and prison authorities, particularly the Office of the Ombudsman and the Special Investigation Unit, as their lack of effectiveness had been the subject of criticism. He would be interested to hear more about the outcome of the small number of complaints of torture that had actually been referred to the courts. He would be grateful if the delegation could explain what criteria had been used to determine that the complaints received in relation to prisoners at Jau Correctional and Rehabilitation Centre, as discussed in paragraph 14 of the State Party report, involved physical or verbal abuse as opposed to torture and what action had been taken against the perpetrators. The Committee hoped that the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions would be taken into account to enable the National Institute for Human Rights to be accredited with A status. The Committee reiterated the recommendations contained in paragraph 29 of its previous concluding observations and wished to be informed of any developments regarding the measures taken to implement them, in particular with regard to legal safeguards to ensure the independence of monitoring bodies, prevent interference in their work and enable them to access all places of deprivation of liberty; safeguards to protect members of such bodies from reprisals when they issued reports that might displease government agencies; and the extent to which those monitoring bodies had the legal authority to bring prosecutions against perpetrators of acts of torture or ill-treatment and the number of such cases. In the same context, the delegation might also provide data on the number of visits carried out by monitoring bodies to correctional and rehabilitation centres and places of detention during the reporting period, including the number of unannounced visits, clarify whether any of the monitoring bodies had received complaints related to violations of the Convention and indicate the outcome of those complaints. He also wished to know what safeguards were in place to ensure that ministries, agencies and other government institutions implemented the recommendations of such monitoring bodies and what measures and sanctions were taken against entities that did not implement them.

15. The Committee would be interested to hear whether the State Party had given any consideration to acceding to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, as the establishment of a national preventive mechanism under the Optional Protocol would assist the State Party in fulfilling its obligations under the Convention.

16. He would be grateful if the State Party could provide information on the content of the human rights training programmes adopted by the Ministry of the Interior. In particular, he wished to know whether they included an introduction to the Convention and the State Party's obligations thereunder, including with regard to the absolute prohibition of torture, criminal responsibility and zero tolerance for perpetrators of torture and ill-treatment,

whether the training programmes at the Royal Academy of Police included components on human rights and the State Party's international obligations, in particular under the Convention, and whether the State Party intended to make the programmes mandatory for all law enforcement personnel.

17. Given the role and importance of the judiciary in implementing standards arising from the Convention, he wished to know whether the State Party had introduced any programmes for prosecutors and judges aimed at providing an introduction to the Convention and the obligations established thereunder with regard to investigating allegations of torture and prosecuting perpetrators, including in the light of the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol), as revised. He wondered whether such programmes were also delivered to officials responsible for arresting and questioning suspects, forensic doctors and all officials in places of deprivation of liberty. Lastly, he wished to know what methodologies were in place for assessing the effectiveness of those programmes, both with regard to their practical application and their impact on reducing acts of torture or ill-treatment.

18. He invited the delegation to indicate any measures taken in law and in practice to strengthen the independence and ensure the impartiality of the judiciary, including through the adoption of procedures for selecting and appointing judges solely in accordance with objective and transparent criteria based on merit, in line with international standards, and the provision of all safeguards to enable the judiciary to perform its functions without any interference from any other authority, in particular the executive. He would appreciate updated information on any investigations and criminal prosecutions of perpetrators of torture and the penalties imposed on them. It would be useful to learn about any developments concerning the implementation of relevant recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry. He would be grateful for clarification regarding the extent to which the public prosecution was obliged to examine allegations of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment and investigate them, including by ordering medical opinions. He would appreciate updated data on allegations of torture or ill-treatment considered by the public prosecution that related to incidents that had occurred during the evidence-gathering or investigation stages or in the course of court proceedings, cases referred by the Ombudsman or the Inspector General and the results of investigations into those cases, cases in which acts had been classified as torture or ill-treatment under the Convention, and the outcomes of any court proceedings.

19. Information on the results of the investigation mentioned in paragraph 50 of the State Party report, which concerned a complaint of torture received from the lawyer of a prisoner at Jau Correctional and Rehabilitation Centre, would be welcome.

20. The Committee wished to reiterate its concern regarding the amendments introduced to article 105 of the Constitution and to the Military Justice Code in 2017, which granted military courts jurisdiction over civilians even if a state of emergency had not been declared. It was regrettable that the State Party had failed to implement the Committee's previous recommendation in that regard. The Committee would like to know what measures had been taken or were planned to revisit those amendments and prevent the exercise by the military of jurisdiction over civilians. The Committee wondered what legislation had been adopted during the reporting period to provide for the obligation to conduct investigations into allegations brought to the attention of judges by defendants or their lawyers or in cases in which they had observed clear signs of torture on alleged victims. He would be grateful for information on investigations of cases in which convictions had reportedly been based on confessions extracted under torture, in particular at Jau Correctional and Rehabilitation Centre, and a list of cases in which sentences had been reviewed because they had reportedly been based on confessions extracted under torture.

21. **Mr. Liu** (Country Rapporteur) said that, while the State Party had taken a number of positive steps to prevent torture and improve detention conditions and had a strong record in combating trafficking in persons, there remained gaps between the country's laws and their implementation in practice.

22. He wondered what specific measures had been taken, since the submission of the report under consideration, to ensure that conditions in all detention facilities, in particular at Jau Correctional and Rehabilitation Centre and Dry Dock Detention Centre, complied with the requirements of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules). He would be grateful if the delegation could describe the measures taken by the State Party to improve prisoners' access to medical care, food, water and sanitation, and provide data or assessments demonstrating the tangible results achieved, and clarify the conditions in which solitary confinement could be used, the procedural safeguards applicable to its use and its maximum possible duration. He wished to know how the Government ensured that solitary confinement was used in a manner that complied with international standards and did not constitute torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

23. The Committee recommended that the State Party should address the issue of overcrowding in detention facilities, ensure that detention conditions complied with United Nations standards and allow independent monitoring bodies to conduct regular unannounced inspections of all places of detention. He wondered what further measures were planned to ensure humane conditions of detention, including adequate medical care, nutrition, ventilation and sanitation, while engaging constructively with independent monitoring bodies and prisoners' families to address complaints in a timely manner. In the context of efforts to maximize the positive impact of Act No. 18 of 2017, concerning alternative penalties and measures, and the open prisons programme, he wished to know how the State Party planned to strengthen judicial oversight, ensure the transparency of eligibility criteria and expand the application of such measures so that all eligible detainees could benefit from them without discrimination. Moreover, it would be useful to learn whether the State Party had considered, as part of its efforts to improve prison infrastructure and monitor detention facilities, expanding the use of restorative justice and community-based sanctions as a means of reducing prison overcrowding. Any statistics illustrating current trends in that regard would be welcome.

24. It was unclear what measures had been taken or were planned to ensure that all persons deprived of their liberty had timely access to adequate and comprehensive medical care, including treatment for chronic illnesses and in emergencies. It would be helpful if the delegation could provide information on the latest findings of any investigations into cases of death or serious injury allegedly resulting from denial or delay in the provision of medical care in detention and indicate what accountability measures had been taken in response. He wondered what training and safeguards were in place to ensure the independence of prison medical personnel and how the State Party ensured that medical decisions were not influenced by the security or administrative authorities. Information on independent mechanisms for monitoring prison medical services and the complaint procedures available to prisoners, including on their accessibility and effectiveness in practice, would also be welcome. He wished to know what steps were in place to ensure the prompt investigation of deaths in custody, including suicides. In that connection, the delegation might indicate how such deaths were investigated, which body was responsible for such investigations, and whether that body was independent of the prison and, if not, what steps were taken to ensure that investigations remained impartial.

25. In view of concerns regarding the State Party's fulfilment of its compensation-related obligations under article 14 of the Convention, he wished to know what steps had been taken to promote access to the National Fund for the Compensation of Victims, enhance its transparency and ensure that it offered victims both economic and non-economic forms of reparation. He wondered, too, what the State Party would do to give effect to the recommendations issued by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, which had called on the authorities to adopt a comprehensive approach to reparations that involved the provision of rehabilitation, the public acknowledgement of acts of torture and the implementation of institutional reforms in order to prevent the recurrence of such acts and promote trust and reconciliation.

26. The delegation might comment on what was done to enforce article 253 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in order to ensure that judges disregarded any statement or confession obtained through coercion. He would like to know whether the authorities had reviewed cases

in which convictions or death sentences had been found to be based on statements allegedly obtained through torture or ill-treatment and would welcome a description of any measures taken to guarantee that victims had access to a fair trial and redress and any mechanisms in place to ensure that law enforcement officials who used threats or coercion to obtain confessions were investigated and held accountable for their actions.

27. He would be interested to hear whether the State Party planned to authorize visits from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the various mechanisms of the Human Rights Council and, if so, what steps were being taken to organize such visits and when they would take place. More detailed information on the State Party's cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross would also be welcome.

28. It had been reported to the Committee that the corporal punishment of children remained lawful in domestic settings, day-care centres for older children and child protection institutions. Accordingly, he would like to know whether the State Party would consider enacting legislation explicitly prohibiting the use of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or corporal punishment in all settings. It would be helpful to learn what was being done to ensure that the provisions of the law on restorative justice for children under which children could be held in social welfare institutions for prolonged periods were not applied to circumvent the prohibition on the placement of minors under the age of 15 in pretrial detention. He wondered what steps were taken to guarantee the presence of a parent or lawyer during the interrogation of children and ensure compliance with the law establishing that children over the age of 15 should be handed non-custodial measures rather than being placed in pretrial detention. He would be curious to know whether the State Party had established independent monitoring and complaints mechanisms to ensure the protection of the best interests of children while in detention or on trial.

29. He wished to learn what measures the State Party would take to further strengthen the juvenile justice framework to ensure that deprivation of liberty was used strictly as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible time and that all children had immediate access to legal counsel and could contact their family from the outset of their detention. In view of reports that children who had been arrested for participating in protests had been subjected to torture or ill-treatment, it would be helpful to know what measures were in place to prevent children from being beaten, threatened or denied an education while in detention. The delegation might also comment on reports that children had been detained without being charged, held in undisclosed locations, threatened in order to extract confessions or subjected to poor living conditions and physical and psychological abuse.

30. He would like to know what the State Party was doing to reduce polygamy, remove all exceptions that allowed persons under the age of 18 to marry, ensure that women did not face criminal penalties for seeking an abortion and improve public knowledge in the area of sexual and reproductive health. Information on the number of cases of domestic violence in which victims had benefited from protection orders or other witness protection measures would be welcome, as would a description of the measures that the State Party intended to take to protect women from domestic violence, sexual violence and marital rape and ensure that the perpetrators were investigated and prosecuted. He would be grateful if the delegation could provide data on the number of cases of domestic violence that had been investigated and prosecuted since 2021 and the number of convictions that had been handed down. He wished to learn what was done to meet the needs of female victims of domestic violence when they were interviewed or provided with services and what legal safeguards were in place to protect women who reported abuse from reprisals.

31. The Committee was concerned about reports that the de facto moratorium on the death penalty had ended in 2017 and that the death penalty had been used as a political tool against individuals who had been handed their sentences based on vague terrorism-related charges. The delegation might explain what offences were classed as the most serious crimes against society and were thus punishable by death. He would welcome information, disaggregated by sex, age, nationality and religion, on individuals who had been executed. It would be useful to learn whether the State Party would consider using more humane methods of execution, introducing provisions to prohibit the execution of pregnant women or abolishing the death penalty altogether.

32. He was curious to know whether the State Party intended to amend its legislation to prohibit the revocation of Bahraini citizenship and what concrete steps had been taken to prevent and reduce statelessness. It would be helpful to learn whether the State Party had taken steps to analyse the issue of labour trafficking with a view to addressing the discrepancy between the number of cases investigated and the number of prosecutions. He would appreciate a description of any training provided to officials responsible for handling cases of trafficking, in particular on topics such as gender-sensitive interviewing, the early identification of victims and the referral of victims to the appropriate services. He wished to learn what was done to ensure that victims could file complaints without fear of deportation or retaliation and would be grateful for an update on the status of the draft amendment to labour legislation that would criminalize the confiscation of workers' passports.

33. **Mr. Contesse** said that he would like to know whether the State Party had adopted any measures in order to fulfil its obligation under article 5 of the Convention, which concerned States Parties' establishment of jurisdiction over cases involving torture.

34. **Mr. Kessing** said that, in view of reports that a number of human rights defenders had been arbitrarily detained and subjected to ill-treatment, it would be helpful to know what the State Party was doing to guarantee such individuals' access to the necessary medical care, improve their conditions of detention and ensure that they could contact their families. He would be particularly interested to hear the delegation's comments on the case of Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, who had reportedly been held in arbitrary detention since 2011 and subjected to torture, and whether the State Party intended to respond to the concerns raised about that case by several United Nations special rapporteurs.

35. **Mr. Buchwald** said that he would appreciate statistics, if available, on how many accused persons had raised complaints that their statements had been obtained through coercion and in how many cases the courts had agreed to disregard the evidence concerned. It would be helpful to know, too, whether any individuals who had been found to have used torture to obtain statements had been investigated and prosecuted.

36. **Ms. Racu** said that she would appreciate the delegation's comments on allegations that persons held in State-run psychiatric hospitals and residential care centres, including persons with disabilities and children, were subjected to ill-treatment and that such facilities lacked adequate oversight and legal safeguards. She wished to know whether any independent monitoring bodies conducted unannounced visits to psychiatric and social care institutions, what safeguards were established to protect persons held in such institutions against ill-treatment and whether involuntary placement orders were regularly reviewed.

37. She would be grateful for information on the regulatory framework governing the use and oversight of coercive measures such as restraints, seclusion and involuntary treatment in residential psychiatric and social care facilities. In particular, it would be useful to know how coercive measures were authorized, documented and supervised and whether persons subjected to such measures had access to a complaints mechanism. It would be interesting to hear about any steps taken to ensure that conditions and staffing levels in psychiatric and social care institutions were in compliance with United Nations standards.

38. She wondered what measures were taken to prevent and respond to gender-based and domestic violence, whether all cases of such violence were properly investigated and whether victims were protected and afforded access to support services. She would like to know whether the police, judges and prosecutors received training in the prevention and combating of gender-based and domestic violence and whether victims of such violence had access to shelters.

The meeting was suspended at 12.10 p.m. and resumed at 12.25 p.m.

39. **A representative of Bahrain** said that, in line with the Government's commitment to implementing the Convention, the Ministry of the Interior trained police officers and other officials in human rights, including the prohibition of torture. Officials had the opportunity to undertake human rights training abroad to ensure their ability to protect citizens and apply the law correctly.

40. The Royal Academy of Police organized courses in international human rights law for prison, security and law enforcement officers. A programme was implemented to build

capacity in the areas of correctional and restorative justice. The General Directorate for Correction and Rehabilitation, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross, had organized workshops for the staff of rehabilitation and correctional centres. The Ministry of the Interior had issued a code of conduct for police officers that was based on international best practice and the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials adopted by the General Assembly. Law enforcement officials received training in the use of force. Force and firearms were to be used only when absolutely necessary and as a last resort. Training sessions on the use of firearms and the use of force during riots were organized, and guidelines on the use of weapons in places of detention had been drawn up. The staff of correctional and rehabilitation centres and detention centres used force only when they were attacked or to prevent inmates from escaping. In rehabilitation and correctional centres, violence and weapons had not been used against prisoners in recent years. The General Directorate for Correction and Rehabilitation had received accreditation from the American Correctional Association. Staff were directly trained by the Association, and partnerships were established with other training institutions. The training provided by public institutions in Bahrain, in coordination with civil society and international organizations, reflected the Government's commitment to a culture of human rights.

41. **A representative of Bahrain** said that the Government was committed to cooperating with the United Nations system in order to promote rights and freedoms, as reflected by the number of treaties to which Bahrain had become a Party. In addition to the treaties that Bahrain had already ratified, the executive and judicial branches were conducting assessments to determine whether Bahrain should ratify the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Optional Protocol to the Convention. The Government supported the objectives of the Optional Protocol, and several mechanisms already performed the monitoring and preventive functions provided for in the Optional Protocol, including conducting unannounced visits to places of detention, without the legal framework having been amended or a new entity established. The decree establishing the Prisoners' and Detainees' Rights Commission took into account the principles set out in the Optional Protocol.

42. The Government engaged in ongoing cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Programmes were implemented to strengthen institutions and share best practices with partners abroad. The Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa had participated in a number of workshops relating to the implementation of the National Human Rights Plan for 2022–2026. The question of a visit by the High Commissioner was being followed up to determine a suitable time and the objectives of such a visit. The Government was committed to cooperating with the special procedure mandate holders, including the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and was considering the possibility of regular country visits.

43. **A representative of Bahrain** said that government hospitals, which were now independent of the Ministry of Health, sought to provide the highest quality of healthcare, including for persons deprived of their liberty. The Ministry ensured that all prisoners had access to healthcare and social and psychological care in line with international standards. A budget of more than \$200 million had been allocated to provide healthcare for persons in detention, and additional staff had been recruited for that purpose. Medical staff travelled to clinics in places of detention so that prisoners did not have to attend the central clinics. Prisoners had access to a full range of services, including psychiatric care, dental care, vaccination programmes, addiction treatment, physiotherapy and treatment for hepatitis C. Remote consultations were held to provide prisoners with specialized treatment and nutritional advice.

44. **A representative of Bahrain** said that the Office of the Ombudsman was an independent national mechanism that monitored the use of solitary confinement, including to ensure that prisoners were not subjected to the measure for more than seven days or for repeated periods. The Office also monitored the implementation of the Correctional and Rehabilitation Institution Act No. 18, which established that a person could be imprisoned only by order of a court or a competent authority and that inmates had the right to be visited by a lawyer and an interpreter and the right to appeal against legal decisions.

45. The Office of the Ombudsman checked documentation relating to complaints and took steps to ensure that inmates could be heard by the disciplinary committee. The Office visited inmates in solitary confinement to ensure that their rights were upheld, including the right to healthcare, and that conditions in cells were adequate.

46. **A representative of Bahrain** said that the Government was committed to protecting the family and ensuring access to justice, redress, psychological support and healthcare for victims of domestic violence. Legislation intended to prevent and combat domestic violence had been adopted, and steps were taken to protect victims and to prosecute perpetrators. Budgets had been allocated for the prevention of domestic violence, and all law enforcement officers had received training in that area.

47. The Family Code stipulated that spouses must treat each other well and that wives had the right not to be harmed, either physically or emotionally. The Criminal Code criminalized any act that undermined the values of the family. The Act on Protection against Domestic Violence defined domestic violence as any harm, including any act of sexual assault, occurring within a family. All acts that might harm the physical integrity or psychological well-being of either spouse, including economic violence, verbal violence and sexual violence, were subject to prosecution. In that regard, the laws of Bahrain were in line with international human rights principles. The Act also established remedies and channels by which victims could obtain access to justice, protection and family services. Victims of domestic violence had access to counselling, legal support, psychological support, treatment, rehabilitation and shelters, among other services. The Supreme Women's Council monitored the implementation of the National Strategy to Protect Women from Domestic Violence. It also provided free consultations and legal services to women victims of violence as well as access to lawyers. The Government had established family counselling centres to improve communication skills within families, as well as programmes for women victims of violence. It managed a number of shelters and protection centres, including a special centre for the protection of children.

48. **A representative of Bahrain** said that article 104 of the Constitution provided for the independence and integrity of judges. In addition to the Constitution, many other regulations protected the independence of the judiciary, the public prosecution service and the Judicial Committee. The work of lawyers was also regulated by law. Article 105 of the Constitution defined the various types of court and their mandates and roles. The law also regulated the role of the military courts, the Bahrain Defence Force and the security services, among other institutions. The majority of trial proceedings were public. The Supreme Judicial Council oversaw the functioning of the various courts.

49. **A representative of Bahrain** said that citizenship could be revoked under the Bahraini Citizenship Act of 1963 and its various amendments. In 2009, an amendment had been made to the Act on the Protection of Society from Terrorist Acts, which had provided that a person's citizenship would be revoked automatically if he or she was convicted of a terrorist offence. Following the adoption of the amendment, a royal decree had been issued to restore the citizenship of more than 550 convicted persons whose citizenship had been revoked under the Act. The laws of Bahrain were now in line with international standards in that they established a balance between the need to safeguard national security and the need to protect human rights.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.