



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

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Committee against Torture Seventy-seventh session

Summary record of the 2024th meeting*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 19 July 2023, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Heller

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* No summary record was issued for the 2023rd meeting.

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

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

Third periodic report of Romania (CAT/C/ROU/3; CAT/C/ROU/QPR/3)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Romania joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Halchin** (Romania), introducing his country's third periodic report (CAT/C/ROU/3), said that much progress had been made with respect to the custody of persons serving prison sentences and persons who were institutionalized owing to mental illness, disability or advanced age since the transition to democracy in the early 1990s. Among the advances made were legislation on the enforcement of sentences and of measures involving deprivation of liberty ordered by the judicial bodies during criminal proceedings (Law No. 254/2013) and a plan of action to improve the infrastructure of the prison system with a view to reducing overcrowding, set out in a government memorandum on the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Rezmiveş and others v. Romania*. Since his Government acknowledged that much work remained to be done, it was committed to implementing the recommendations of international bodies, including those of the Committee and the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
3. The National Prison Administration managed 33 men's prisons, 1 women's prison, 6 prison hospitals and 4 juvenile detention centres, which, together, comprised some 12,700 prison staff and 23,500 inmates. The Administration's main priority was expanding accommodation capacity, with plans in place to accommodate 5,800 additional prisoners by the end of 2025. In 2021 and 2022, the authorities had exceeded their target, adding 724 new beds and surpassing the 655 originally planned, with a further 1,275 places planned for 2023. Construction of two new prisons with a combined capacity of 1,900 beds was expected to start in February 2024.
4. Another priority was the social rehabilitation and integration of prisoners. The fact that a significant number of prisoners were working or studying and that the Administration offered more than 100 reintegration programmes in areas such as mental health, drug and alcohol addiction and sexual abuse had resulted in a reduced recidivism rate, from 46 per cent in 2012 to under 37 per cent in 2022.
5. The country's detention and remand centres were administered by the General Inspectorate of Romanian Police and governed by the Code of Criminal Procedure (Law No. 135/2010) and by Law No. 254/2013. Efforts were under way to upgrade 31 detention centres, which would result in more than 1,400 new beds. Work had been completed in 4 centres, with nearly 150 added beds, and 5 detention centres were currently undergoing a complete overhaul. Nationwide, steps were being taken to improve the staffing, equipment and material conditions of the centres, including prisoner transport. Particular emphasis was being given to staff training.
6. Reporting to the Ministry of Health and working with a range of governmental, non-governmental and academic institutions, the National Centre for Mental Health and Drug Abuse Control set the priorities for an integrated approach to the often interconnected issues of mental health and substance abuse. The Centre's main objectives included the provision of training for mental health workers, the establishment of a psychiatric care system accessible to the wider community, in order to facilitate patients' social reintegration, and the promotion of a sectoral programme of free psychiatric treatment for patients suffering chronic conditions. The Centre had developed a multidimensional national mental health programme, covering areas such as education and public awareness campaigns, social reintegration and efforts to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.
7. In November 2022, his Government had adopted a national strategy on the deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities, and legislation to support the process (Law No. 7/2023) had subsequently been enacted. Measures to promote such deinstitutionalization included a new case-management system and independent living plans for persons with disabilities, along with better monitoring of indicators relating to persons with disabilities

who were institutionalized. Also, more than 100 projects were under way, relating to day centres and other types of service for persons with disabilities. The legal protections of persons with disabilities had been strengthened under amendments to Law No. 140/2022 on protection measures for persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, which took a new approach to guardianship, and by a new methodology for assessing the need for representation of persons with disabilities.

8. **Mr. Touzé** (Country Rapporteur), commending the State party on the regularity of its reporting, said that he wondered why just one report from civil society had been submitted. It was unusual for civil society to have such little involvement in the review of a State party's report, in particular that of a State member of the European Union.

9. He wished to know whether the bill to amend legal acts on public order and safety (PLX No. 405/2018) had been enacted. He would appreciate an update on the measures taken to establish a single unified national register of detention, as recommended by the Committee, in particular implementation of the Încarcerații software referred to in the State party's report to streamline the process. It would be useful if the State party could confirm that the statutes of limitations for offences of torture and slavery had been abolished under Law No. 186/2021 but a five-year statute of limitations remained in force for cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. He would like to know whether the State party planned to extend the advances made under the law, with respect to the statute of limitations, to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

10. He wondered how the State party intended to address the isolated cases in Romania of denial of the most basic legal rights, such as the right to know the grounds for one's arrest or the right to legal representation, and how it planned to further bolster the work it had already done in ensuring respect for such rights. He would welcome the delegation's views on the release on bail of accused persons who were not considered dangerous. He would appreciate further details of alternatives to pretrial detention employed in Romania and the number of persons in pretrial detention. Given that an accused person's lawyer was often not given the opportunity to meet with his or her client in private, either before or after the person's questioning, he wished to know whether the State party planned to address that situation.

11. The Committee had seen reports of politically controlled bodies with the power to discipline judges and prosecutors for their decisions or political positions and, while the section for investigating criminal offences within the judiciary had been dissolved in response to international and civil society pressure, judges who had spoken out against the section had reportedly been disciplined. For example, in December 2022, the Superior Council of Magistrates had relieved the pro-reform judge Cristi Danileț of his duties for "misconduct on social media", reportedly for his fierce criticism of changes to the law on the judiciary introduced by the previous Government that were said to be conducive to corruption. While the decisions to dismiss and later remove him were subsequently overturned by a higher court, the legal provisions on disciplinary measures against the judiciary continued to raise concerns. In view of the various relevant decisions adopted by Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights, he wondered whether the Government intended to meet its obligations, under various international instruments, in respect of the independence of the judiciary.

12. It would be helpful to have statistical data on the enforcement of penalties against perpetrators of racial or ethnic discrimination and harassment, of public incitement of hatred or discrimination or of the propagation of antisemitic, anti-Roma, fascist, racist or xenophobic ideas or symbols. He wished to know whether the State party was investigating reports by Roma groups of police harassment and brutality, including beatings. He would be interested in hearing about any steps taken to raise awareness among police forces about the situation of Roma populations. He wondered whether the State party intended to take affirmative action to encourage greater Roma involvement in public authorities, for instance the police. He asked whether any impact assessment of the "No discrimination!" project run by the Romanian Police had been conducted.

13. He would be interested to hear what progress had been made with the project to develop a methodology for investigating criminal offences motivated by discrimination. It

would also be useful to know whether the incitement to violence on the grounds of discrimination had been made a separate criminal offence under national law and, if not, whether any plans had been made to introduce such an amendment. He wished to know whether the Strategy for the Inclusion of Romanian Citizens Belonging to the Roma Minority for the period 2012–2020 and the national strategy for equality, inclusion and diversity had been evaluated and, if so, what results they had produced. The Committee would welcome further information on any plans to develop new measures at the national level aimed at reducing discrimination against the Roma population. He would also appreciate further information on any practical measures that had been taken to ensure that allegations of violent criminal offences committed by law enforcement officials against members of the Roma community were investigated with due diligence, with a focus on the particular requirements specific to crimes motivated by discrimination and in observance of international standards. The State party had indicated that victims of acts of violence were entitled to request compensation. He would therefore welcome further information on cases where individuals had successfully sought redress and on the procedure by which compensation could be awarded and paid out.

14. He wished to know what steps the State party was taking to guarantee the legal and factual independence of the criminal police and special criminal investigation authorities in the context of their criminal prosecution activities. In that regard, it would be helpful to know whether Act No. 304/2004, which provided for the secondment of officers of the criminal police to the prosecutor's office to conduct independent investigations, was being fully enforced. The Committee would also welcome further information concerning the implementation and outcomes of the State party's strategy for the effective investigation of allegations of ill-treatment by public officials.

15. The State party had provided information on the number of cases concerning violent criminal offences committed by law enforcement agents that had been settled between 2016 and 2018. He would appreciate more detailed information on the 52 cases that had gone to court, including the number of convictions obtained, the grounds for those convictions and the sentences handed down. The Committee would also welcome updated statistics on such cases. The State party had suggested a number of practical reasons why only a relatively small percentage of cases concerning torture and ill-treatment inflicted by law enforcement officials had resulted in convictions. He would like to know what measures it intended to take to resolve those issues, particularly since responsibility for a number of them would appear to lie with the Government.

16. The statistics provided in the annex to the report on the number of complaints of acts of torture or ill-treatment recorded during the reporting period dated back to 2017. The State party should therefore update those statistics and provide further information on investigations, disciplinary and criminal proceedings, convictions and the criminal or disciplinary sanction applied.

17. The Committee would welcome further information on the measures taken by the State party to give effect to the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights on the case of *Pârvu v. Romania*, in which it had been ruled that law enforcement authorities had failed to conduct an effective investigation into the death of a man at the hands of Romanian police officers. Updated information on the progress made with the following cases would also be of interest: the investigation launched by prosecutors in 2021 into the alleged involvement of three police officers in the death of a 63 year-old man in Piteşti in April 2021; the case of seven police officers who had been detained in March 2021 and subsequently charged with torture, unlawful deprivation of liberty, misconduct and forgery by the Prosecutor's Office attached to the Bucharest County Court; and the trial of police officers for the alleged ill-treatment of two people who had reproached them for not wearing masks in Bucharest in September 2020.

18. The Committee was aware that, in the context of its response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the State party had exercised the right of derogation from its obligations under the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights). He would welcome further information on all derogating measures that had been taken, above all concerning the deprivation of liberty and other matters that might have had an impact on the fulfilment of its obligations

under the Convention against Torture. Further details on the scope of those measures, how long they had remained in effect and whether it had been possible to challenge their application before the national courts would be appreciated.

19. **Mr. Rouwane** (Country Rapporteur) said that the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) had raised concerns about three cases where inmates had been immobilized and strapped to beds for over five hours at prisons in Giurgiu, Craiova and Galați. He would welcome further information on the extent to which such disciplinary measures were used at places of deprivation of liberty, particularly since CPT had made it clear that the actions of the prisoners in two of the cases did not pose any imminent risk of injury or violence. He also wished to know whether the State party had taken any steps to implement the Committee's recommendation to put an end to the permanent presence and use of special intervention units in prison facilities. It would be useful to hear what measures had been taken to ensure that prisoners alleging to have suffered ill-treatment were given access to a free and confidential medical examination and what systems had been put in place to protect those prisoners from reprisals. Confirmation as to whether all health-care staff in prisons were offered training on the updated version of the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol) would also be of interest. The Committee would welcome further information on the number of complaints made by prisoners concerning ill-treatment and on the individuals that had been prosecuted as a result of their allegations.

20. He would be interested to find out what steps were being taken to address the concerns raised by CPT in relation to prison overcrowding, poor conditions in prisons and the insufficient nature of the health-care services provided for inmates. The Committee would also welcome information about the number of complaints that had been made in application of Law No. 254/2013, under which anyone who was held in custody could file complaints to certain authorized parties. It would be helpful to know what the outcome of those complaints had been. Furthermore, he wished to know more about any legislative and institutional amendments that had been introduced to ensure that persons under arrest were not held in police custody for more than two days without being charged with a crime.

21. He would appreciate the delegation's comments on reports that detained women were not systematically screened for sexual abuse or other forms of gender-based violence inflicted before entering the prison system and that no systematic blood checks were carried out on detained persons for viruses such as hepatitis B and C and HIV/AIDS. He would also appreciate it if the delegation could comment on reports suggesting that many prisoners were made to strip completely naked and squat while being searched upon their admission to prison.

22. He would like to receive clarification as to why Parliament had abolished the compensatory mechanism providing for reductions in sentences, which had originally been introduced as a measure to solve the problem of prison overcrowding following the pilot judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Rezmiveş and others v. Romania*. He would also like to know what measures had been taken by the State party to use existing legal provisions to ensure that effective domestic remedies that included compensation were available prior to the planned reform of the prison system.

23. Pursuant to the adoption of the national strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities for the period 2016–2020, a number of public institutions had been tasked with providing support services to ensure effective access to justice for persons with disabilities. However, in 2018, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe had expressed her extreme concern that persons living in psychiatric and social care institutions did not enjoy effective access to justice. He would therefore be interested to know what measures had been taken by the different authorities, and above all the Ministry of Justice, to fulfil those duties.

24. He would welcome information on reports that, while psychiatric institutions and wards were required to report all deaths to the investigative authorities, social care institutions were only required to report suspicious deaths. He also wondered why so few investigations into deaths in psychiatric hospitals and wards had led to criminal prosecutions. Furthermore,

it would be useful to know whether any plans had been made to repeal the legislation under which persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities could be deprived of their legal capacity or, at least, to introduce automatic periodic reviews of decisions on guardianship and ensure compliance with procedural safeguards. He would appreciate the delegation's comments on reports that it remained very difficult to challenge decisions concerning involuntary placements in psychiatric institutions. He also wished to know whether the State party would consider making all decisions to prolong such placements subject to judicial review.

25. He would appreciate it if the delegation could clarify whether the legislation on placements in social care homes only applied to voluntary placement and placement at the request of a legal representative. Confirmation as to whether such placements were subject to judicial review would also be of interest. He would welcome the delegation's comments on reports that persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities found themselves without the necessary support to express informed consent for their placement in a social care home. Furthermore, it would be useful to know whether national legislation provided for the involuntary relocation of persons from psychiatric institutions to social care homes and, if so, what mechanism had been put in place to facilitate such action. He wished to know whether it was true that many people living in institutions had been deprived of their legal capacity and left without any form of representation.

26. The Committee would welcome further information on the State party's response to the concerns raised by the national preventive mechanism and in other quarters about poor conditions at many psychiatric and social care institutions, including overcrowding, poor hygiene, lack of adequate health-care services and insufficient training of employees. In that regard, the Committee would also like to know the reasons behind the decision of the Ministry of Health to revoke its memorandum of understanding with the Centre for Legal Resources, which was the only non-governmental organization (NGO) that had been authorized to carry out monitoring activities at those institutions.

27. He wished to know how many asylum applications between January 2015 and December 2018 had been approved in Romania on the grounds of an asylum applicant being at risk of torture in his or her country of origin. He would welcome information on the outcome of the criminal investigation launched in 2018 by the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice into the case of Abd al-Rahim Hussayn Muhammad al-Nashiri, which had involved the taking of testimonies from officials who had held high-level positions at the time of the alleged violations, including a former President and former Prime Minister.

28. While Romania was a party to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the country's citizenship law lacked provisions for the prevention of stateless children born in Romania whose parents were stateless themselves or were unable to pass on their nationality. The law did not meet the requirements in article 1 (a) of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness or article 6 (2) (b) of the European Convention on Nationality. It would be useful to learn whether the Government intended to amend the law to ensure that all persons born in Romania could acquire Romanian nationality regardless of the status of their parents and to establish a statelessness determination procedure to identify and protect all stateless persons in the country.

29. While the State party had made some advances in its asylum procedure, there were concerns about amendments to the laws on asylum and aliens that had extended the grounds on which applicants might be detained in so-called specially arranged closed areas. In 2017, the Human Rights Committee had raised concerns about the age assessment procedure, which allowed asylum-seeking minors to be placed temporarily in centres for adults. There were further concerns about persons with disabilities, older persons and victims of gender-based violence against women being detained without their needs being properly identified. A report by the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) had expressed concerns about poor access to legal representatives for persons apprehended at the border and limited gender-sensitive training available to the border police. He would like to know whether measures had been taken to ensure that the asylum process effectively identified, referred and assisted vulnerable persons and to ensure that neither unaccompanied minors nor families with children would be subject to detention.

30. Notwithstanding the pressure placed on the asylum system due to the crisis in Ukraine, and reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of a heavy reliance on NGOs for refugee integration programmes, both GREVIO and the Border Violence Monitoring Network had expressed concern over reports of violent pushbacks by border police. He wished to know whether measures had been taken to end such action, which was prohibited by the provisions of the Convention concerning ill-treatment and non-refoulement.

31. Regarding trafficking in persons, despite relevant amendments to article 211 of the Criminal Code in 2020, the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls had found that Romania had the highest number of victims of trafficking and traffickers in the European Union. Several reports had identified significant barriers to addressing the issue, including corruption, impunity, limited access to justice, a lack of experienced interpreters, lengthy proceedings and failure to award compensation. He wished to know whether an assessment of the outcomes of the 2018–2022 National Strategy against Trafficking in Persons and the 2018–2020 National Action Plan had been carried out; whether a new plan had been adopted; whether further details of the 2022–2023 campaign to raise awareness among young people about preventing and combating trafficking in persons could be provided; and whether there were updated statistics on cases relating to trafficking in persons during the period under review. He would also welcome information on the status of pending draft legislation (PLX No. 77/2021) aimed at extending the statute of limitations for human trafficking offences, increasing the minimum penalty for trafficking in adults and adding new aggravating circumstances to the relevant articles of the Criminal Code.

32. While a national strategy had been adopted to prevent and combat gender-based violence for the period 2022–2027, such violence seemed to remain a widespread problem in Romania. The Working Group had received information that sexual violence had been underreported, and reports suggested that very few cases of domestic violence had been prosecuted, with human rights activists finding that some police officers had tried to dissuade survivors of rape or domestic violence from filing a claim. In addition, female genital mutilation and forced sterilization had not been expressly criminalized. He would appreciate the delegation’s comments on those observations. He would also be interested in hearing the delegation’s comments on the fact that article 199 of the Criminal Code relating to domestic or family violence did not apply to former spouses and partners or family members who did not share a residence with the victim.

33. Despite improvements to criminal legislation on the protection of minors against sexual violence, he shared the concerns of GREVIO over the national courts’ failure to develop a consistent practice with respect to issues related to victims’ consent, which had meant that national courts still decided whether child victims of sex crimes, as young as 11, 12, 13 or 14 years old, had consented to sexual intercourse with an adult. He therefore wished to know what steps the State party was taking to tackle that major problem.

34. While the law prohibited physical violence against children, there were still reports that many children continued to suffer corporal punishment in the home and abuse in schools. He therefore wished to know whether any amendments to the law had been introduced to prohibit corporal punishment in all settings. He would appreciate the delegation’s comments on the Human Rights Committee’s concerns about the living conditions and health of children in care and the inadequate monitoring of abuse and exploitation in childcare facilities.

35. He would like to know what measures the Government had taken to implement the recommendations in a report by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions to bring the Romanian Institute for Human Rights into line with the Paris Principles. Lastly, he wished to know what steps had been taken towards full compliance of the People’s Advocate (Ombudsman) institution with the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups.

36. **Mr. Halchin** (Romania) said that it was unclear why the NGO community had not made more submissions for the current review. The prison system was collaborating with over 60 NGOs, the police and Ministry of Internal Affairs with over 70 NGOs and the Ministry of Health with 7 NGOs. His Government attached great importance to transparency

in its engagement with civil society and was very willing to provide the Committee with any information it required.

37. **A representative of Romania** said that the Police Inspectorate was continually striving to ensure the application of Law No. 405/2018, which protected the rights of persons taken into police custody. In 2019, legislation regarding the organization of the police had been updated. Prisons and the police force were gradually transitioning to the use of electronic systems for the online storage of the data of persons held in police custody and in pretrial detention. The rights of such persons were largely protected by legislation, and while there might be delays in translating information regarding rights and regulations for those who spoke less common languages, access to an interpreter was readily available, with 14 languages covered.

38. Judges were taking fewer decisions to place suspects in pretrial detention. All persons remanded in custody were entitled to appoint a lawyer or to have a lawyer officially assigned to them. Defendants could communicate freely with their lawyers, both in prisons and in detention centres.

39. A bill drafted in 2022 incriminated all forms of discrimination against the Roma minority. Between 5 and 10 slots in the Police Academy were reserved each year for members of the Roma community.

40. An office responsible for the investigation of hate crimes had been established in May 2021 at the headquarters of the Romanian Police. In addition, the Government had adopted a strategy in 2021 that targeted hate crimes, radicalization and xenophobia. Data that had been compiled since its implementation would be examined when the strategy ended in late 2023. The independence of the criminal police was guaranteed by legal safeguards, including during investigations that they conducted with public prosecutors.

41. **Mr. Halchin** (Romania) said that CPT had expressed concern in 2021 about the use of bed restraints to immobilize prisoners. The authorities had requested support from the Council of Europe and had received a grant of about €4,000 two months later for the recruitment of specialists to assess the treatment of persons with serious mental illnesses. They would shortly submit their final report. Changes would be made nationwide in terms of procedures and the physical infrastructure of prisons. Prison hospitals would provide treatment for mentally ill inmates, and psychiatric physicians and specialized nurses would be recruited.

42. Special intervention teams were prohibited from wearing masks when performing their duties. A pilot project introduced in early 2022 in three prisons enabled the teams to serve solely as escorts outside prisons or to intervene in the event of serious disturbances. As many regular staff had left the system, the lack of experienced frontline personnel had created an additional problem. However, the system would be effectively reformed in due course.

43. A slight decrease in prison overcrowding had been recorded in recent years. There were plans to create 1,275 new cells in 2023 and it was hoped that the problem would be resolved by 31 December 2024. An additional 100 cells for men and 80 cells for women were currently being constructed in Craiova Prison. An additional 55 cells would be constructed in Mărgineni Prison by the end of 2024. It was hoped eventually to overhaul or even close old prisons that failed to meet modern standards.

44. Action had been taken in 2021 to address the shortage of medical staff in prisons. Currently, 78 per cent of posts for nurses and 54 per cent for medical staff had been filled, but a major improvement was expected by the end of 2023. Steps had been taken to recruit a large number of psychologists to address mental health problems, and staffing levels currently stood at 70 per cent for psychologists.

45. An office had been established in late 2021 at the headquarters of the National Prison Administration to monitor conflicts between inmates, allegations of sexual abuse and allegations of ill-treatment by prison staff. Inmates would be permitted in the near future to file a complaint by calling the office from their cells, since every cell was equipped with a telephone.

46. **A representative of Romania** said that the Ministry of Health permitted NGOs with professional staff and appropriate documentation to visit psychiatric hospitals. Two NGOs had applied for access to date. Permission had been granted in one case and had been temporarily denied in the second case on account of the lack of appropriate documentation.

47. The National Centre for Mental Health and Drug Abuse Control had begun to conduct nationwide visits to psychiatric hospitals, focusing on the infrastructure, the services provided and human resources in terms of specialized staff. With regard to the allegations of the lack of proper food for patients, the Ministry of Health had ordered that funds for psychiatric hospitals should focus on patients' well-being.

48. Overcrowding of psychiatric hospitals was due to the absence of community and ambulatory psychiatric services and the lack of specialized staff. The Government had received funds from the European Union under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, some of which had been allocated to the local management of psychiatric hospitals in order to address such issues.

49. There were plans for providing training courses in forensic psychology and psychiatry and training courses for nurses working in secure mental health-care facilities. A pilot project on community psychiatry would be expanded in due course from the county level to the regional and national levels, facilitating a reduction in overcrowding in psychiatric hospitals, promoting patients' reintegration into society and reducing the overall costs of running psychiatric facilities.

50. All psychiatric hospitals had been required since 2013 to report deaths to the National Centre for Mental Health. A total of 563 deaths had been reported in 2022. As the enactment of domestic legislation on mental health was a complex matter, there were plans to establish an interdepartmental working group, in which NGOs and academics would be invited to participate in the drafting of proposals for legislation. All hospitals had established a system that facilitated the filing of complaints by patients with psychiatric disorders. They could also file complaints with the National Centre for Mental Health and Drug Abuse Control of the Ministry of Health. Three or four complaints were filed each week. They were all treated seriously and a solution was invariably found.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.