



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Summary record of the 2960th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 13 April 2023, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Shepherd

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

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

Combined twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth periodic reports of the Russian Federation (continued) (CERD/C/RUS/25-26; CERD/C/RUS/Q/25-26)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Russian Federation joined the meeting.*

2. **Mr. Payandeh** (Country Rapporteur) said that much of the State party's legislation intended to address racist hate speech and propaganda appeared to refer more generally to extremism. That made it difficult to evaluate whether the legal provisions in force encompassed all kinds of racist hate speech and the dissemination of racist ideas as provided for in article 4 of the Convention. He would therefore like to receive more detailed information about how many incidents of racist hate speech had been reported, how many prosecutions had been brought and convictions secured and which groups had been targeted.

3. Given that the traditional media landscape was dominated by State-owned entities, the Government would seem to be in a position to prevent hate speech in the media. He would therefore welcome the delegation's thoughts on why the issue appeared to persist. It would be helpful to know exactly how the State party monitored the media, in particular with regard to the dissemination of hate speech; how that monitoring was coordinated between the federal level and the constituent entities of the Russian Federation; and what mechanisms were in place to prevent, report and address incidents of hate speech. Additional information on incidents involving hate speech and the authorities' response would also be appreciated.

4. He would like to know how many incidents of online racist hate speech the State party had identified; how online hate speech, in particular on social media platforms, including VKontakte (VK), was monitored and dealt with; and whether victims of online hate speech had recourse to any complaint or reporting mechanisms.

5. In the light of serious concerns that practices amounting to racial discrimination were taking place in the armed conflict with Ukraine, he would be grateful if the delegation could explain what measures were being taken to ensure that the State party's armed forces were complying with international humanitarian and human rights law, in particular with respect to violations affecting individuals and groups protected under the Convention. It would also be useful to know how the State party was ensuring that the negative consequences of the armed conflict, in particular for civilians and civil society, did not disproportionately affect specific ethnic groups. What steps had been taken to ensure that people outside the State party's territory but under its effective control, including in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as the provinces of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia, did not suffer discrimination in the enjoyment of their human rights?

6. He wished to know what efforts had been taken to effectively investigate allegations of violations of human rights of the Crimean Tatar people, in particular abductions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and ill-treatment; to bring perpetrators to justice; and to provide victims or their families with effective remedies. He would appreciate an explanation about reported acts of vandalism and desecration targeting Crimean Tatar cultural heritage. In the light of reports that most of the Crimean Tatar people now studied in Russian, details about any measures to provide education at all levels in the Crimean Tatar language would also be appreciated. Lastly, in the context of the closure of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, he would like to know of any measures taken to guarantee that community the right to political representation and participation.

7. **Ms. Stravrinaki** (Country Task Force) said that, owing to concerns over structural discrimination and prejudice that affected the Roma community, she would appreciate information on the number of persons in the Roma community, disaggregated by gender and age, and a more detailed appraisal of their enjoyment of economic and social rights, including housing, education, employment and health care. She wished to know more about the implementation and resources of the Comprehensive Plan of Action for the Socioeconomic

and Ethnocultural Development of the Roma in the Russian Federation, how the Plan addressed the structural discrimination faced by the Roma community, to what extent that community was involved in implementing and evaluating the Plan and how it was assessed and updated. She would welcome more information about activities aimed at strengthening national identity and would like to know how the distinct identity and culture of the Roma community were being respected in view of reports by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in 2019 and others that the “unity in diversity” approach in the Russian Federation had become increasingly biased in favour of unity at the expense of diversity.

8. She would be grateful if the delegation could comment on statements made in the report of the Federal Agency on Ethnic Affairs on the implementation of the above-mentioned plan of action for the second half of 2020 to the effect that a significant part of Roma community lacked common values and was little involved in public institutions, had a low level of legal knowledge and archaic traditions and grossly violated the rights of children to education. It would be useful to have an update on the implementation of measures to support Roma children and families struggling with basic educational programmes, the resources allocated to that support and the number of beneficiaries in the previous five years, and efforts to assess and enhance the assistance available. She would also like to know more about the monitoring of and measures taken to reduce unjustified absences from school and provisions to improve the quality of education of Roma children. Information on the aims of the so-called Roma classes would be welcome. She wondered whether children from other ethnic groups had the right to attend them, whether other ethnic groups were also entitled to specific classes and what measures were in place to prevent segregation from being practised. She wished to know whether reported cases of Roma children being refused enrolment on account of their ethnicity had been investigated.

9. It would be useful to learn what provisions existed to prevent evictions of Roma and the demolition of their homes, to compensate those affected and to provide adequate housing alternatives. She would like to know the number of unregistered buildings, including those threatened by demolition, the number of settlements deemed unsafe, the number of buildings that had been legally documented in favour of members of the Roma community and the situation regarding the provision of alternative accommodation or land or tenant buyouts in the previous five years. She would also welcome clarification about reports that Roma settlements were subjected to electricity and gas cuts as repressive measures, and details of any investigations that had been conducted into such cases.

10. Taking into account general recommendation No. 36 (2020) on preventing and combating racial profiling by law enforcement officials, she would like to know what operational standards applied to a pattern of police raids and mass arrests that had been emerging since 2020 and appeared to target Roma men. Had any investigations been conducted when arrested members of the Roma community had been subjected to ill-treatment, and what measures were in place to ensure their access to justice?

11. Several cases of violent clashes between members of the Roma and non-Roma communities had occurred since 2017. According to reports, following such incidents in Chemodanovka and Ust-Abakan, hundreds of persons from the Roma community had been arbitrarily detained and their houses vandalized. Neither the violence nor subsequent ill-treatment by law enforcement officials had been properly investigated. She would like to receive an update on those two incidents, including measures taken to investigate allegations of discrimination against the Roma community, hold those responsible accountable and provide effective remedies and reparation, including compensation. She would like to know what steps had been taken to protect Roma victims from retaliation or reprisals when they reported such cases and how dialogue and mutual understanding were being fostered between different Roma and non-Roma communities with a view to achieving tolerance and peace.

12. **Mr. Guissé** (Country Task Force) said that he would like to receive more information on the legislative and policy frameworks regarding asylum-seekers, refugees and internally displaced persons and on measures taken to ensure access to education, employment and health services, without discrimination, for all persons under the State party’s jurisdiction. He would welcome statistical information on non-citizens including refugees, asylum-

seekers and stateless persons living in the Russian Federation and wondered what measures were in place to help non-citizens and stateless persons acquire citizenship.

13. He wished to know what steps had been taken to simplify residence registration procedures, in particular for stateless persons, refugees, persons granted temporary asylum and persons belonging to minority groups, including the Roma, in accordance with general recommendation No. 30 (2004) on discrimination against non-citizens. Had any measures been taken to put an end to discriminatory or arbitrary behaviour by officials involved in registration activities?

14. An update on steps taken to address discrimination and difficulties stateless persons continued to face in registering their marriage and gaining access to education and health-care services would be welcome.

15. In the light of reports that irregular migrants and stateless persons could be deprived of their liberty for up to two years under administrative procedures, he would appreciate more details about the administrative detention of persons belonging to those groups and measures taken to address their situation and provide them with legal assistance.

16. He would also welcome further information on reports that the State Duma, the lower house of the Federal Assembly, was considering legislative amendments that could result in persons convicted under several articles of the Criminal Code being deprived of their citizenship. He would like to know whether a human rights-based approach had been incorporated into the plans and what safeguards had been provided to prevent persons from becoming stateless as a result of the amendments. He wished to invite the State party once more to consider ratifying the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

17. It would be useful to learn how education on human rights, including on racial discrimination, was being promoted in school curricula, university programmes and teacher training, and whether there was a public education programme on the State party's historical development as a multi-ethnic State. He would appreciate information on the number of civil society organizations that participated in education activities combating prejudice and intolerance. Had any concrete measures been taken to raise awareness among the general public, public officials, law enforcement and judicial authorities of the importance of cultural diversity, tolerance and understanding?

18. Lastly, he would like to receive updated information on the activities of the Federal Agency for Ethnic Affairs.

19. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would like to know whether the State party had adopted the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2014–2024. Reports had been received of members of the black community, including students, experiencing racism on account of their skin colour. He would like to know what measures had been taken or were envisaged to combat such discrimination. He would also be interested to know what actions the State party had taken, during the International Decade for People of African Descent, to promote and protect the rights of that group.

20. **Mr. Balcerzak** said that he was interested in hearing about the State party's position regarding the applicability of the Convention in all territories under the control of the Russian Federation, even if active hostilities and armed combat were continuing.

21. The Committee had received information concerning the transfer of children from Ukrainian to Russian territory in 2022 and early 2023. As most of the children were not of Russian ethnic or national origin, he wished to hear about the number of children involved, the grounds for their transfer and the agency responsible for the procedure.

22. **Ms. Esseneeme** said that the Committee had been informed that Federal Act No. 38-FZ of 30 March 1995 on the Prevention of the Spread of Diseases Caused by HIV contained discriminatory provisions applicable primarily to non-nationals. For example, foreigners were required to submit a negative HIV test in order to obtain an entry visa. In addition, migrants had been tested for HIV every three months since December 2021, and their residence permit or labour permit could be revoked if they tested positive. They were also denied the funds offered to citizens for treatment of HIV/AIDS. Such provisions violated the

principle of universal access to public health and medical care established in article 5 of the Convention, and the goals of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and of Zero Discrimination Day. She wished to know whether the State party cooperated with the UNAIDS country office and whether it intended to abolish discriminatory provisions against persons living with HIV, particularly migrants, by granting them the right to work and access to social services.

The meeting was suspended at 10.45 a.m. and resumed at 11.05 a.m.

23. **A representative of the Russian Federation**, referring to a question regarding the rights of Indigenous Peoples, said that his country comprised 190 different ethnicities. In the course of its history, the Russian State had been created as a union of peoples. The Old Russian State had thus come about as a union of the Slavic and Finno-Ugric peoples, which had determined its future development as a multi-ethnic State. Therefore, in accordance with the Constitution, Russia was a State whose only source of power was its multi-ethnic people. Russia was currently a federal State composed of republics, autonomous provinces and autonomous areas, established in the interest of the populations that historically formed part of the Russian State. Like other multi-ethnic countries, the Russian Federation had difficulties with the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples relating to land and natural resource rights. It had abstained during the General Assembly vote on the Declaration in 2007. However, it had supported the outcome document of the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples in 2014, which reaffirmed Member States' support for the Declaration and their commitment to the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

24. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that there was no need to enact a separate law on organizations of human rights defenders given that human rights organizations were a type of non-profit organization whose activities were governed by existing relevant legislation, such as the Civil Code, Federal Act No. 7-FZ of 12 January 1996 on Non-Profit Organizations and Federal Act No. 82-FZ of 19 May 1995 on Voluntary Associations. Such acts regulated, *inter alia*, their registration, the exercise of State oversight in that area and reporting obligations. In addition, Federal Act No. 294-FZ of 26 December 2008, which provided for protection of the rights of legal entities, also extended to non-profit organizations. The law regulated announced and unannounced inspections. Action to protect non-profit organizations included a number of preventive State measures to warn against possible dissolution procedures in connection with their involvement in extremist or terrorist activities. Such measures included warnings by the Ministry of Justice or the Office of the Procurator General and administrative proceedings. Thus, there was no need for further regulation in the light of the current laws and regulations in that area, based on the protection of non-profit organizations and the precedence given to their rights.

25. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that there were several grounds for removing individuals or organizations from the list of foreign agents, such as ceasing to receive or refusing to receive foreign funding, or the issuance of a judicial ruling. The concept of foreign agents had been incorporated into the legislation in 2012. Some 40 organizations had been removed from the list since 2012 due to the cessation or refusal of foreign funding, and four had been removed pursuant to a judicial decision. A total of 10 individuals and more than 10 organizations had been removed from the list in 2022, since they no longer received foreign funding.

26. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, while non-governmental organizations had participated actively in the preparation of the current report, they had not been similarly involved in drafting separate reports owing to the very brief deadlines set by the Committee. It was quite a challenge to prepare a report and have it translated into English within three months. However, measures to raise awareness among non-governmental organizations about the reporting process were being adopted and assistance for translation of their reports would be provided if necessary.

27. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that her country's anti-discriminatory legislation included all the offences listed in article 4 of the Convention. Article 280 of the Criminal Code prohibited incitement to extremist activities, including racial or religious hatred. Article 282 prohibited incitement of racist or religious hatred or enmity. Article 286 prohibited violence based on racial hatred that entailed bodily harm or

murder. Racial discrimination and enmity constituted aggravating circumstance in all such cases. The funding of extremist activities based on racist or ethnic hatred and the funding of extremist organizations were also criminalized. During the past two years, perpetrators of 59 crimes of funding of racist activities had been prosecuted.

28. Article 4 of the Convention provided for the prohibition of organizations that incited racial discrimination. Articles 7 and 9 of the Federal Act on Combating Extremist Activity specified the procedures for prohibiting organizations that were involved in any type of racist activity. Article 4 of the Convention stated that public authorities should not be permitted to promote or incite racial discrimination. The Federal Act on Combating Extremist Activity also prohibited such acts, and similar provisions were contained in the strategy to combat extremism and the strategy on national and ethnic policy.

29. Action to combat hate speech focused on impeding access to certain Internet websites, identifying persons who uploaded such hate speech and bringing them to justice. Administrative penalties for such acts had proved effective. During the past two years, 1,175 offences related to dissemination of hate speech had been identified and more than 2,000 persons had been held administratively responsible for such offences. More than 60,000 websites had been blocked for hate speech in 2022. The large number of websites was due to the fact that hate speech was usually uploaded by means of Internet resources administered outside the country. Russian citizens had been targeted more frequently in recent months.

30. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that there were no bodies in Russia that specifically regulated the activities of the media. The Federal Service for Supervision of Communications Information Technologies and Mass Media conducted daily monitoring of the compliance of information disseminated by the mass media with current legislation through automated systems. The law prohibited the use of mass media to promote violence, hatred and discrimination on ethnic or racial grounds and the dissemination of extremist material. Mass media meant organizations that were duly registered with that status and had the rights and obligations provided for by law. Mass media activities could be prohibited only by means of a court decision or decision of the founders. According to the register, 500,780 media materials had been added to the register of prohibited information since 2012. Access to only six such materials was currently blocked, as the remainder had been removed pursuant to decisions by the Federal Service.

31. The definition of extremist activities in Russian legislation was very clear. It included incitement to racial, ethnic or religious enmity. State authorities took decisions, in accordance with their mandate, on information disseminated on the Internet that posed a major risk to society. The Procurator General took action on information promoting extremist activities and condoning extremism.

32. With regard to the question concerning the VK social media platform, the owners of such networks were required to abide by the law and prevent the dissemination of information aimed at slandering citizens on the grounds of their racial, ethnic or religious affiliation or their language. All such information or comments must be deleted pursuant to instructions from the Procurator General. More than 243,000 web pages had been included in a register of prohibited information since 2012, more than 12,000 Internet sites were currently blocked and the rest of the extremist information had been deleted.

33. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the Physical Culture and Sport Act and the regulations imposed by international and Russian sports federations prohibited all forms of discrimination, racism and xenophobia in sport. The Russian Football Union, in line with the Football Sustainability Strategy 2030 of the European Football Associations (UEFA), worked actively to combat all forms of discrimination in football. It had established a special project on sustainable development and social responsibility to prevent such manifestations. Preventive outreach activities were being conducted among young people and in professional football clubs with that end in view. During the period from 2021 to 2023, a disciplinary oversight committee had identified nine cases of violations of article 121 of the disciplinary regulations, which prohibited discrimination, racism, propaganda and the public display of Nazi paraphernalia or symbols. Penalties had been imposed on the perpetrators.

34. In March 2023, prior to the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, a major tournament and a duathlon had been held, with the support of the Russian Football Union and with the participation of representatives of African States, in order to popularize football and cybersport among children with disabilities.

35. An unprecedented discriminatory policy was being implemented against Russian sports federations, sportsmen and sportswomen by, among others, the International Olympic Committee. On 1 February 2023, the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance of the Human Rights Council had commended the Committee for considering the possibility of allowing certain athletes from the Russian Federation to participate in international sports events. On 22 February 2022, the Committee had drawn attention to General Assembly resolution 77/27 concerning sport as an enabler of sustainable development. The resolution stated that major international sport events should be organized in the spirit of peace, mutual understanding and international cooperation, friendship and tolerance, and without discrimination of any kind, and that the unifying and conciliative nature of such events should be respected.

36. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that State agencies, law enforcement bodies and procurators monitored online platforms with a view to identifying material liable to incite racial hatred. Civil society, private citizens and voluntary associations were also actively involved in such efforts and reported online hate speech to the procurator's office or the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technologies and Mass Media. The procurator's office investigated reports of online racist hate speech and, where necessary, made requests to the Federal Service to block websites hosting offensive messages or material. The procurator's office took action not only against calls for acts of extremism but also racial discrimination and participation in the activities of racist organizations. In some cases, a blocked website could be unblocked if the person responsible for running it removed material identified as being in breach of the law. Decisions to block a website were subject to appeal. Russian law thus struck a balance between respect for the rights of citizens and for the rights of owners of online resources.

37. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that a number of the Committee's questions concerning the Republic of Crimea could not be addressed during the constructive dialogue as they were the subject of proceedings currently before the International Court of Justice. The Committee might wish to raise those matters again once the Court had issued a judgment in the case. If a matter was being considered by another international body, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights or African Court on Human and People's Rights, the Committee could not examine complaints on the same matter. The subject of the human rights situation in the Republic of Crimea should not have been raised in the concluding observations on the twenty-third and twenty-fourth periodic reports of the Russian Federation ([CERD/C/RUS/CO/23-24](#), para. 20), as that subject had not been discussed during the related constructive dialogue nor mentioned in the corresponding periodic reports or the Committee's list of issues prior to reporting. However, the Russian Federation was committed to complying with its international obligations throughout its territory, including in the Republic of Crimea and the federal city of Sevastopol. Missions from international organizations would be welcome to visit the Republic of Crimea provided that they complied with the procedures applicable to visits to the Russian Federation.

38. **Mr. Barinov** (Russian Federation) said that United Nations agencies should see for themselves what was happening in the Republic of Crimea rather than relying on partisan accounts of the situation. The special military operation did not fall within the purview of the Committee. However, it should be noted that the Russian Federation complied with all its obligations under international treaties in all regions of the country, including the Donetsk People's Republic, the Luhansk People's Republic, Kherson Province and Zaporizhzhia Province. In October 2022, the Government had informed the Secretary-General that the Russian Federation would be withdrawing from certain of its obligations under international law following the imposition of martial law in those regions.

39. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the word "abduction" was not the appropriate term to describe the Government's humanitarian mission to evacuate children

from conflict zones with a view to protecting them and ensuring their access to education and health care. The coordinating body responsible for the mission was the Office of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights, which was an independent national mechanism for protecting children's rights. The Office had provided detailed information on the humanitarian mission to international organizations, civil society organizations and other bodies. Information on the mission was also published online and included in a bulletin on the activities of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights. According to the Presidential Commissioner, since February 2022, around 5 million residents of the Donbas region, including around 700,000 children, had crossed the border into the Russian Federation. The children had travelled with their parents, guardians or legal representatives. Furthermore, around 200,000 children from children's homes had also crossed the border although the majority had already returned to their places of residence. Foster care was provided to children to satisfy their development needs and to prevent them from being placed in an institution. The Office of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights carried out audits of children and worked in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Committee of the Red Cross and other agencies and organizations.

40. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, according to a recent census, around 173,000 Roma were living in the Russian Federation, with the majority living in rural areas. Although the Roma population appeared to have fallen over the previous 10 years, that fall could probably be explained by the fact that the census had taken place during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, when conditions had been far from normal. There were around 7,000 Roma settlements in the Russian Federation. Members of Roma communities had full access to education, health care and social welfare benefits.

41. The Comprehensive Plan of Measures for the Socioeconomic and Ethnocultural Development of the Roma in the Russian Federation was currently being implemented. The plan involved federal ministries, the education system and civil society organizations, including the Federal Autonomous Ethnic and Cultural Organization of Roma. It was funded by the federal ministries and by regional government bodies and addressed areas such as housing, education and health care. The effectiveness of the plan was assessed and monitoring visits were made to settlements where it was being implemented. The local authorities were responsible for developing infrastructure in the Russian Federation, including in Roma settlements. The social infrastructure in Roma settlements was highly developed and included schools, kindergartens, medical centres and cultural institutions. In Krasnodar territory, all Roma settlements had access to water, electricity and gas.

42. Since 2020, the Federal Agency for Ethnic Affairs had provided funding to projects implemented by the Federal Autonomous Ethnic and Cultural Organization of Roma. It supported the organization of an annual festival that brought together Roma from different parts of the country and served as a showcase for Roma culture. Organizations of Roma in different parts of the country promoted the culture of the Roma people. In Tula Province, plots of land had been made available to the Roma population. In Penza Province, documentation relating to the connection of a gas pipeline to plots of land owned or leased by Roma had been drawn up. The authorities blocked access to gas or electricity supplies only when there were illegal connections to the public utilities. Energy companies could also cut off supplies of gas or electricity if they did not receive payment for their services within three months of the due date.

43. An opinion poll conducted in 2020 had found that around 70 per cent of the Roma population lived with their extended families in relatively closed communities. According to the poll, around 70 per cent of Roma said that they had friendly relations with other ethnic groups although 23 per cent said that there was potential for tensions to arise between them.

44. The people who had left Ust-Abakan because of the conflict there had returned. Currently, a total of 378 Roma, including 191 minors, were living in Ust-Abakan. Roma families had also settled in other villages in Khakasia, where they lived in homes with access to water and heating. Local authorities continually monitored the development of utilities infrastructure. A court had upheld a decision to destroy a number of houses that had been built without authorization. The situation had now become stable and no reports of further offences had been received.

45. The people who had fled Chemodanovka to escape the conflict there had since returned. In fact, the Roma population of Chemodanovka was over 25 per cent higher than it had been previously. A new school had been built in the village in 2022 and steps were being taken to improve the utilities infrastructure. Organizations for children had also been established.

46. **Mr. Barinov** (Russian Federation) said that the conflicts in Chemodanovka and Ust-Abakan had been related to anti-social behaviour rather than ethnic tensions or prejudices against the Roma. In Chemodanovka, a fight had resulted in the death of a citizen, which had then sparked pogroms and arson attacks. Around 900 Roma had been forced to leave their homes but they had since returned and the situation had stabilized. Education was the key to promoting the social integration of the rural population. In Roma communities, children often stopped their education after primary school and girls married at a very young age. To address that problem, steps were being taken to promote school retention among Roma communities.

47. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, under national law, Roma children were guaranteed access to all levels of the education system on an equal footing with children of other ethnic backgrounds. Children had the option of attending school on a full-time basis, combining school learning with learning outside school, or being educated entirely at home. As a result of the measures taken by the Government, the number of Roma children enrolled in school had increased significantly since the 2020/21 school year. School enrolment was mandatory from the first grade of primary school to the ninth grade of secondary school. After ninth grade, children could either go on to general upper secondary school for two years or a vocational college or continue their studies in an institute of higher education. Currently, around 1,000 Roma children were enrolled in the tenth or eleventh grades at school and around 3,000 were studying at a vocational college.

48. Special commissions were established in schools to determine the reasons for a child's failure to attend, and assistance plans were drawn up to address any obstacles, such as medical issues. Emphasis was placed on motivating Roma children to attend school by encouraging them to plan for their future. In an effort to facilitate direct and transparent communication with ethnic groups, including the Roma, the Ministry of Education and Science and its regional branches had established public councils, with significant participation by civil society and non-governmental organizations. An education oversight mechanism had been created at the federal level. Representatives of State authorities received complaints relating to education at weekly meetings with the public, and complaints could also be lodged via a 24-hour telephone hotline, or online. Pupils could choose to study in one of the country's many national languages, including the Romani language. All children had access to preschool, school and support classes without discrimination of any kind, including on grounds of ethnicity.

49. **Mr. Kut** (Follow-up Coordinator) said that the State party's position on paragraph 20 of the previous concluding observations was not acceptable to the Committee, which, under the Convention, was entitled to define and interpret its own working methods. The Committee would draw up concluding observations regardless of whether the State party provided the requested information. Moreover, there was nothing in the Convention or the working methods that prevented the Committee from addressing matters of public knowledge, even if they were also being dealt with by the International Court of Justice. The Committee was not bound by court decisions, nor did it pass judgment on possible violations of the Convention; rather, it existed to engage States parties in constructive dialogue to help improve protection for groups that might suffer racial discrimination. Its relationship with States parties was not adversarial.

50. **Mr. Barinov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation did not view the Committee as an opponent. It would respond to the questions relating to paragraph 20 of the previous concluding observations once the International Court of Justice had issued its decision, and each of the Committee's questions that the delegation had been unable to answer would be addressed in future reports.

51. **Mr. Payandeh** said that while the International Court of Justice had found that it was competent to hear the case, that decision made no mention of the competence of the Committee. The rule that prevented the Committee from considering individual complaints

that were pending before a court did not apply to the State party reporting procedure, since the interactive dialogue did not constitute judicial proceedings.

52. **Mr. Balcerzak** said that it was not legally possible to derogate from the Convention, although States parties could denounce it.

53. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that it would be useful to have school enrolment figures for the general population against which to compare the statistics relating to Roma children.

54. **Mr. Diaby** said that, in the light of reported reprisals against civil society actors who had cooperated with the Committee in the past, particularly Ms. Yana Tannagashova and Mr. Vladislav Tannagashov, the Committee wished to know how such reprisals were prevented; whether the alleged reprisals had been investigated and, if so, what the outcomes had been; and what measures were planned to prevent reprisals following the current interactive dialogue.

55. **Mr. Barinov** (Russian Federation) said that Ms. Tannagashova had refused his offer of assistance in resolving the dispute involving her community, the Indigenous Shor people. Her actions were not aimed at protecting her community, but at maximizing her financial gain from the dispute.

56. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, in the case involving Ms. Tannagashova, who had not been persecuted by the authorities, almost all members of her community had been resettled and had received compensation greater than their homes' market value. Ms. Tannagashova, however, had refused that compensation and had pressured her father to do likewise; his property had since suffered significant damage in an unexplained fire. The problems concerning access to the community's cemetery and holy site had been resolved, which were now administered by the local self-government authority.

57. **Mr. Barinov** (Russian Federation) said that he remained willing to assist Ms. Tannagashova in returning home and resolving the situation. She travelled between Switzerland and Sweden and received donations from dubious voluntary associations. The Shor people, however, did not consider her to be their representative or to act in their interests, but to act only in the interests of her family.

58. **Mr. Guissé** said that he would welcome a response to his request for statistics on non-citizens, including refugees, and for information on residence registration and the planned amendments to citizenship legislation, particularly regarding the revocation of citizenship.

59. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, while the Government was committed to constructive dialogue, it would be premature to engage in dialogue on the matter currently before the International Court of Justice. The rule that prevented multiple international bodies from addressing the same matter applied to human rights treaty bodies, regardless of the extrajudicial and non-binding nature of their decisions. The Government did not dispute the fact that the Committee was tasked with assessing compliance with commitments under the Convention and providing general observations and recommendations, and it was clear that the competences of the Committee and the International Court of Justice intersected in that regard. The Government would be ready to consider discussing the matters addressed in paragraph 20 of the previous concluding observations once the proceedings at the International Court of Justice had concluded.

60. **Mr. Payandeh** said that, while he welcomed the State party's participation in the interactive dialogue, he regretted that not all the Committee's questions had been answered and that the State party had refused to address a number of issues.

61. **Mr. Barinov** (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Government had unique experience in upholding the rights of the many peoples and ethnicities within its territory. The Committee should assess the Government's actions objectively and without bias; the interactive dialogue had taken place in the difficult context of the special military operation in Ukraine, the reasons for which were not communicated objectively in Western media. For its part, the Government would continue its work in the area of racial discrimination and remained open to discussing the findings of the Committee, whose recommendations would be closely studied by the executive and the necessary action taken.

62. **The Chair** said that the Committee members, who were unbiased, independent experts, did not represent the media, held themselves to the highest standards of non-discrimination and endeavoured to undertake their work with the utmost objectivity.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.