



International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

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Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families Thirty-ninth session

Summary record of the 575th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 4 December 2024, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Diallo

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

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 73 of the Convention (continued)

Combined second to fourth periodic reports of Egypt (continued)
(CMW/C/EGY/2-4; CMW/C/EGY/Q/2-4; CMW/C/EGY/RQ/2-4)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Egypt joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Egypt**, replying to questions posed at the preceding meeting (see [CMW/C/SR.574](#)), said that, since 2011, Egyptians living abroad could exercise their right to vote at the Egyptian embassy or consulate in their country of residence. During the last parliamentary elections in 2021, eight seats in the House of Representatives had been reserved for persons representing Egyptians living abroad. The services provided by diplomatic missions included the evacuation of Egyptian citizens from conflict areas, most recently from Lebanon and Sudan. The Egyptian embassy in Kyiv had arranged for the evacuation of approximately 4,000 Egyptian citizens at the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war. Some 16,000 Egyptian students who had returned from conflict areas had been admitted to universities in Egypt.
3. According to estimates from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), there had been upwards of 9 million migrants and refugees from 133 countries residing in Egypt as of August 2022. More than 80 per cent came from just four countries: 4 million from Sudan, 1.5 million from Syria, 1 million from Libya and 1 million from Yemen. The average age of migrants was 35, and there was a fairly even balance between men and women. The majority of migrants lived in just five governorates: Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, Damietta and Dakahlia. More than two-thirds of migrants were in stable employment, and some 60 per cent had been well-integrated into Egyptian society for more than 10 years.
4. **A representative of Egypt** said that, in accordance with the country's obligations under article 69 (1) of the Convention, a Prime Ministerial decree had been issued with a view to normalizing the situation of migrants in an irregular situation. Foreign nationals residing in the country irregularly were required to apply to the General Directorate of Passports, Immigration and Nationality to obtain the right of residence. They must present a receipt confirming that they had paid their residency fees and any fines, in addition to the cost of the residence permit. The Government's approach was consistent with the Committee's general comment No. 2, which encouraged States parties with migrant workers within their territory in an irregular situation to consider the possibility of regularizing the situation of such persons in each individual case, in accordance with applicable national legislation and bilateral or multilateral agreements, taking into account the circumstances of their entry, the duration of their stay and other relevant considerations, in particular those relating to their family situation. Migrants who did not regularize their situation were not permitted to work, primarily in order to ensure that they did not become victims of exploitation. The State endeavoured to provide those migrants with support to complement the assistance provided by international donor organizations.
5. The Children's Act was fully compatible with the joint general comment of the Committee and the Committee on the Rights of the Child on State obligations regarding the human rights of children in the context of international migration in countries of origin, transit, destination and return. It did not permit the detention of children under the age of 15 and provided for a separate criminal justice system for children. With respect to the judicial rulings mentioned in article 27 of the report, in the first two cases the court had confirmed the right of foreign nationals to freedom of movement, in line with article 8 of the Convention, by overturning decrees issued by the Minister of the Interior which had imposed restrictions on the freedom of movement of certain persons. The third ruling had recalled the right of foreign nationals to engage in work on an equal basis with Egyptian citizens, as provided for in the Convention.
6. **A representative of Egypt** said that the first joint unit to combat violence against women had been established in 2021. It received and examined complaints of violence and coordinated with the relevant authorities to deal with them, for example by providing temporary accommodation and comprehensive legal and psychosocial support to victims.

The unit comprised representatives of various ministries as well as the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the National Council for Women and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. It submitted twice-yearly reports to the Prime Minister and urgent reports if necessary. Other measures taken to combat violence against women included the establishment of 42 anti-harassment and violence units on university campuses, as well as 10 units for women victims of violence in university hospitals. There were three forensic medicine clinics for the examination of female victims of sexual assault and nine shelters for victims of violence and trafficking. Dedicated departments had been established in the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior.

7. The National Committee for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation had been established in 2019, co-chaired by the National Council for Women and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and with representatives from various ministries, government agencies, judicial bodies, civil society organizations and religious communities. The penalties for female genital mutilation offences had been increased pursuant to an amendment to the Criminal Code. As part of its plan for the period 2022–2026, the National Committee had run a wide-reaching awareness campaign. The incidence of female genital mutilation had decreased from 21 per cent in 2014 to 14 per cent in 2021 among girls under the age of 19. The helplines run by the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and the National Council for Women played an important role in protecting girls who were victims of genital mutilation.

8. Article 80 of the Constitution and article 2 of the Children's Act stipulated that a child was any person under the age of 18, while the Civil Status Act prohibited the marriage of either boys or girls under the age of 18. The Criminal Code set out penalties of imprisonment or a fine for anyone who provided false information or submitted falsified documents to facilitate the marriage of children under the legal age. As part of the National Strategy to Combat Early Marriage, which focused on geographical areas where the practice was widespread, a number of awareness programmes had been run, including a community programme to educate poor families about the dangers of early marriage. The Government was also working to improve the living conditions of poor families, in order to eliminate the reasons that caused them to marry off their daughters at an early age.

9. **A representative of Egypt** said that early marriage involving any form of exploitation of the child was considered human trafficking and dealt with as a serious offence. If no exploitation was involved, it was dealt with as an offence of child endangerment. Both the father who consented to the marriage and the husband were charged with that offence, which carried a prison sentence.

10. **A representative of Egypt** said that there was no discrimination between Egyptian and foreign workers, as all were subject to the provisions of the Labour Code. In accordance with article 52 of the Convention, only a few specific professions were reserved specifically for Egyptian workers, such as customs officer or tourist guide, and work in the import and export business. Foreign nationals who entered the country with the intention of working needed to obtain a work permit. The purpose of the reciprocity clause in the bilateral agreements Egypt had concluded with certain countries was to exempt foreign nationals from having to obtain a work permit and from restrictions on working in certain professions. It did not affect their rights and duties under the Labour Code.

11. The bilateral agreements concluded with countries that applied the *kafalah* system sought to ensure that Egyptian migrant workers were properly remunerated and allowed to change employers, and that any termination of their employment contract was justified. Egyptian labour offices in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Iraq and Italy had amicably resolved more than 18,000 complaints from workers, created almost 300,000 job opportunities and provided hundreds of technical and legal consultations.

12. **A representative of Egypt** said that the 2003 Labour Code had been drafted taking into account the rights enshrined in the international conventions to which Egypt was a party. Those rights had been explicitly incorporated into enforceable provisions of the Code. On the subject of the entry and exit of foreign nationals, the Egyptian courts were required to apply the law directly, without reference to the text of the Convention. The State enjoyed

considerable discretionary power in fulfilling its duty to maintain public order and ensure national security. On that basis, it took measures to prevent foreign nationals who posed a threat to public order from entering the country.

13. Concerning the judicial rulings mentioned in the State party report, the first had referred mainly to Decree of the Minister of the Interior No. 2214 of 1994, which regulated travel-ban lists. That Decree was based on article 31 of Act No. 89 of 1960 concerning the entry, residence and departure of foreign nationals, as well as on article 13 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, according to which even an alien lawfully in the territory of a State party could be expelled “in pursuance of a decision reached in accordance with the law”. Another of the rulings had overturned a decree of the Minister of the Interior which failed to grant Egyptian citizenship to the child of a foreign national married to an Egyptian woman. Such a decision would now no longer be a matter of judicial discretion since, under the recent law amending the 1975 Nationality Act, anyone born in Egypt to a father or mother of Egyptian origin was entitled to Egyptian citizenship. The third ruling had overturned a decree of the Minister of the Interior for the deportation of a female Moroccan migrant worker married to an Egyptian man. The decision had been made to deport her because of a criminal conviction against her for incitement to debauchery, and her application for Egyptian nationality had been rejected on the same grounds. She had appealed against both decisions and, having been acquitted in the criminal case, she fulfilled the criteria for obtaining Egyptian nationality. The Supreme Administrative Court had thus overturned the decisions to deport her and to deny her citizenship.

14. Between June and November 2024, the National Centre for Judicial Studies had organized four training sessions for 71 judges specialized in labour law, with a focus on international labour conventions. Training on human rights at the Police Academy covered the rights of migrant workers and members of their families. Between January 2020 and July 2024, the Ministry of the Interior had organized seven training courses in coordination with IOM, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Training had also been provided to staff of the Ministry on various issues related to migrant smuggling and human trafficking. A total of 1,500 judges had received training on international labour standards at the International Labour Organization (ILO) training centre in Italy and had, in turn, organized training sessions upon their return to Egypt. Work was ongoing between the Ministry of Justice and ILO under the Advancing the Decent Work Agenda in North Africa project and had resulted in the publication, in 2023, of a judicial handbook on international labour standards. It was too early to assess the impact of the handbook, but it would no doubt form the basis of future judgments.

15. **A representative of Egypt** said that Egypt was among the States most severely affected by climate change and, to address that challenge, had created the National Council for Climate Change. In addition, the State Authority for Public Mobilization and Statistics and the National Council for Population had undertaken studies into climate change, population distribution and internal displacement, and the National Council for Human Rights had set up a subcommittee on climate justice and sustainable development. The subcommittee, which studied the impact of climate change on human rights, had undertaken a number of field visits to governorates affected by regular and irregular migration. Details about the subcommittee’s work were available on the website of the National Council for Human Rights.

16. The Supreme Standing Committee for Human Rights, established in 2020, was responsible for overseeing the fulfilment of obligations arising from the international treaties to which Egypt was a party. Its duties included preparing periodic reports and overseeing the implementation of recommendations. It was also involved in drafting and monitoring the implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy, and in formulating, coordinating and overseeing government policies in that regard. It also proposed legislative amendments, most recently those concerning new labour laws.

17. **A representative of Egypt** said that there was a close relationship between climate change, internal displacement and migration. In that regard, the National Coordinating Committee to Combat and Prevent Irregular Migration and Human Trafficking worked closely with a number of United Nations agencies, including IOM, UNODC, the

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

18. The National Coordinating Committee had undertaken social studies into particular aspects of migration, such as youth migration and unaccompanied migrant children, and it had produced a map of the governorates most affected by migration. Alongside international partners, such as the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation and the European Union, the Committee's efforts and those of the Government were focused on development as a fundamental and durable solution to migration. There was a strong political commitment at the highest levels of the State to combat irregular migration and human trafficking, and presidential decrees had recently been issued for the creation of the Fund for Combating Irregular Immigration and the Protection of Migrants and Witnesses and the Assistance Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking.

19. The plan of action of the National Coordinating Committee to Combat and Prevent Irregular Migration and Human Trafficking for 2024–2026 envisaged a four-pronged approach. Firstly, the authorities sought to prevent irregular migration by blocking the departure of boats. Thanks to those efforts the number of irregular migrants leaving Egypt had fallen greatly and was insignificant compared to the number of those entering. Secondly, the plan of action focused on protecting foreign migrants. Thirdly, it envisaged international partnerships to stem if not entirely to eradicate irregular migration and human trafficking. Lastly, the plan envisioned the prosecution of offenders.

20. The National Coordinating Committee provided training to law enforcement officials, first responders and labour inspectors. Some 6,000 persons had benefited from the training between 2019 and 2023. According to IOM figures, 3,830 foreign migrants had been voluntarily repatriated from Egypt to their countries of origin between 2020 and 2024. Migrants wishing to avail themselves of the option of voluntary return received support from the Assistance Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking.

21. **A representative of Egypt** said that there were no camps or detention centres for refugees and migrants in Egypt, and it was a matter of State policy that migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers should have freedom of movement. The Irregular Migration and Migrant Smuggling Act No. 82 of 2016 included specific provisions to protect migrants, particularly women and children, who were fleeing situations of armed conflict. In addition to the nearly 5 million Sudanese who had been living in Egypt for many decades, a further 500,000 had recently entered the country in the wake of the current crisis in the Sudan. There had been no mass expulsions or mass trials of Sudanese citizens. All legal proceedings against persons who committed criminal acts were conducted in accordance with the law. Foreign offenders could, as a precautionary measure, be deported under Act No. 89 of 1960 concerning the entry, residence and departure of foreign nationals.

22. A robust legislative and judicial framework was in place to prevent torture or ill-treatment, to hold perpetrators accountable and to provide victims with redress and compensation. A number of channels were available for reporting alleged instances of torture, including the police, the Human Rights Section in the Ministry of the Interior and the National Council for Human Rights. Those channels were equally accessible to citizens and foreigners, and all complainants were eligible for legal aid. Particular attention was paid to women, children, migrants and trafficking victims. The courts, for their part, would reject any evidence or statements shown to have been obtained by use of torture. Victims of torture received the requisite physical and mental healthcare.

23. Prosecutors conducted regular visits to places of detention and could launch investigations into possible acts of torture even in the absence of a complaint. Between November 2019 and July 2024, the Ministry of the Interior had investigated 1,017 cases of alleged ill-treatment by its own staff, and disciplinary and legal measures had been taken against those found guilty. Action was also being taken to raise awareness in schools, universities and the wider community to change societal attitudes vis-à-vis torture. Persons applying for a job might be subjected to medical tests for communicable and non-communicable conditions such as coronavirus disease (COVID-19), HIV/AIDS, high blood pressure or diabetes. Such tests served exclusively to protect public health and uphold

workers' rights, and they were carried out on citizens and migrants alike, without discrimination.

24. **A representative of Egypt** said that it was important to recall the unprecedented challenges that Egypt was facing. Thanks to government investments in healthcare over the previous 10 years, Egypt was now free from polio, hepatitis C, tuberculosis and malaria. Yet, at the same time, the country's borders remained open to persons displaced by the armed conflicts raging in States to the north, south and west. That situation raised the question of the direct link between migration and public health. It was vital, in fact, that the incoming migrants and refugees should be vaccinated so that the gains achieved in the field of public health should not be lost. He hoped that the United Nations and the international community understood that situation and would provide support and funding.

25. All expulsions and deportations from Egypt were regulated by law. A number of civil society organizations existed to assist persons against whom an expulsion order had been issued. They sought to appeal such orders before the courts, in some cases successfully. The Egyptian consulate in Port Sudan continued to issue visas to Sudanese citizens wishing to enter Egypt. However, it was important to recall that not everyone seeking refuge and asylum was necessarily well-intentioned, and the Government of Egypt was entitled to take action to protect the safety and security of its own citizens. The Government had also assisted around 20,000 Sudanese citizens in Egypt to return voluntarily to their own country.

26. **Ms. Gahar** (Country Rapporteur) said that she would be interested to hear about any specific measures that had been put in place to ensure that the expulsion or deportation of foreigners was carried out in full respect of their fundamental human rights. She wondered what criteria were used to determine if a foreigner constituted a threat to public order, public health or national security, all of which were grounds for expulsion under Act No. 89 of 1960. She would appreciate it if the delegation could illustrate what channels of appeal were open to migrants facing expulsion and whether they had access to legal assistance and psychological support. She looked forward to hearing more details about how civil society organizations collaborated with the State to protect the rights of migrants. She also hoped to learn about policies to protect the families of migrants, particularly those that risked being separated by an expulsion or deportation. How could migrants report any violations they suffered in the course of an expulsion process?

27. In the light of a recent UNICEF report that had drawn attention to the integrated child protection systems that existed in Egypt, she wished to know what alternatives to detention were used when dealing with displaced children. While commending the State party for acting to ensure that Arabic-speaking migrant children could pursue their education in Egypt, she wondered what steps were taken to support the schooling of those who did not speak Arabic. Lastly, she wished to know if there were any programmes specifically tailored to meet the healthcare needs of migrant children, particularly those who were unaccompanied or in situations of vulnerability.

28. **Mr. Ceriani Cernadas** (Country Rapporteur) said that he wondered if the authorities had conducted an evaluation of the policy introduced in 2023 following the outbreak of conflict in the Sudan, under which Sudanese citizens were required to obtain a visa before entering Egypt. Previous experience had shown that such policies could have both positive and negative effects, notably that of increasing the number of irregular migrants. He wished to know if the Government had any plans to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

29. He would appreciate a comment from the delegation on a recent report suggesting that some 240,000 migrant children in Egypt were not enrolled in school. If that figure was correct, he wondered what action the authorities were contemplating to address and rectify the situation. He would also appreciate it if the delegation could reply to his earlier question about the situation of Palestinians in Egypt, in particular the more than 100,000 Palestinians who had arrived in the country recently. He wished to know if they were able to regularize their situation in the country, if they were able to work and if they had access to education and healthcare. In that connection, the Committee was concerned by the fact that a private

company, Hala, was reportedly charging Palestinians thousands of dollars per person to cross into Egypt from the Gaza Strip. He wondered why a private company should be involved in such a complex humanitarian situation and what role the State played in overseeing the activities of that company.

30. He would be grateful for data on the number of migrants who had benefited from regularization programmes, and the number still in an irregular situation. He would like to know what approach the State party took to investigating allegations of human rights violations, such as the collective expulsion of Sudanese nationals. He wondered how a positive HIV test impacted a migrant's ability to obtain a work permit. Lastly, he wished to know how the State party guaranteed the freedom of human rights defenders to carry out their work, even when it involved criticism of certain decisions adopted by the authorities.

31. **Mr. Babacar** (Country Rapporteur) said that he wished to know whether the expiration of a migrant's work permit affected his or her right to reside in Egypt, and whether the State party would agree that charging a fee of \$100 for a work permit could be considered a discriminatory practice. He was curious to learn whether children born to parents in a mixed marriage were registered automatically, whether migrants had the right to freedom of association and whether care and social protection was available to migrants. He also wondered whether trade unions were involved in the authorization of privately run temporary employment agencies to ensure that those agencies upheld the rights of migrant workers.

32. **Mr. Taghi-Zada** said that he would welcome further information about the protection of the rights of Egyptian migrants working abroad. For example, could they vote in Egyptian elections and obtain access to support through embassies or consulates?

33. **Mr. Oumaria** said that he would like to know whether foreign students who wished to work in Egypt after their studies were required to obtain a work permit. It would also be of interest to learn how conflicts between statutory law and sharia law were settled in court, and what legislative provisions and practical measures were in place to protect domestic workers.

34. **Mr. Charef** said that he would be interested to learn more about what the State party was doing to encourage Egyptian expatriates and their descendants to return to or stay in Egypt, such as through strategies to involve them in socioeconomic development at a national, regional or local level. He also wondered what steps were being taken to strengthen the country's capacity to monitor, report and prevent human rights violations, and what human and financial resources were available for that purpose. He would like to know what the State party was doing to mitigate the consequences of climate change and to advocate the legal recognition of climate refugees.

35. **Mr. Corzo Sosa** said that he would like to obtain further information on the impact of the Irregular Migration and Migrant Smuggling Act No. 82 of 2016, including the number of complaints filed against traffickers and the number of convictions. He would also welcome data on migrants with disabilities living in Egypt. He wondered whether the State party could confirm reports indicating that restrictions had been placed on the transfer of remittances by migrant workers to family members and on cash withdrawals outside Egypt. He also wished to know what forms of consular support were available to Egyptians arrested abroad.

36. **Ms. Dzumhur** said that it would be of interest to know whether an anti-discrimination commission and a monitoring body had been established to ensure the implementation of anti-discrimination provisions. She would like to hear more about the consultation process undertaken in drafting the law on foreign asylum, the current status of the draft law and how it regulated the legal status of refugees and asylum-seekers. She would be grateful for further details on migrants' access to the health system, particularly with respect to women's sexual and reproductive health, and on the monitoring mechanisms in place to protect workers in the informal sector.

37. She wondered if the delegation could comment on reports that some migrant workers, particularly Nigerian nationals, faced harsh working conditions and arbitrary practices. It would be useful to have more information on the status of domestic workers under labour law and on the legal assistance available to migrants, including those against whom an expulsion order had been issued. She wondered how many cases had been reviewed on the

basis of the Council of Ministers' decree regarding the regularization of migrant workers' status, including how many positive and negative decisions had been made. She would welcome further information on the bilateral agreements established with destination countries receiving migrants from Egypt and with the origin countries of migrants coming to Egypt.

38. **Mr. Ünver** said that he wished to know whether the State party had a structure dedicated to protecting the rights of members of the diaspora, and whether efforts had been made to improve relations with their countries of residence.

39. **Mr. Kariyawasam** said that he would like to learn whether the State party had taken steps to encourage more countries, especially labour-receiving countries, to ratify the Convention.

40. **The Chair** said that, according to the State party's periodic report, it was estimated that 60 per cent of foreign nationals living in Egypt had been there for more than 10 years but only 6 per cent had been there for 15 years or more ([CMW/C/EGY/2-4](#), para. 25). She would be interested to know why so many foreigners departed the country before having completed 15 years of residency and whether the State party's socioeconomic integration strategies were designed to encourage migrant workers to become long-term residents.

41. While the State party was to be commended for its leading role in addressing climate change at the international level, it would be helpful to know whether it had taken any steps to study and understand the specific impact of climate change on migrants in Egypt and to produce evidence and data in that connection. Details of any strategies in place to mitigate the impact of climate change on migrants would also be appreciated.

42. Many concerns had been raised regarding the State party's new asylum law, which, as she understood it, had already been approved by the Egyptian parliament and was now awaiting the approval of the President before being signed into law. The delegation might confirm whether her understanding was correct and indicate whether, prior to its adoption, the law might be amended to address the concerns raised, whether civil society and the National Council for Human Rights had been consulted on the law prior to its submission to the Egyptian parliament and what had prompted the decision to shift the responsibility for registering asylum-seekers and determining their refugee status from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the Egyptian authorities.

The meeting was suspended at 12.15 p.m. and resumed at 12.30 p.m.

43. **A representative of Egypt** said that the Government had introduced entry visa requirements for Sudanese nationals following the escalation of the crisis in the Sudan, as the ensuing influx of migrants into Egypt had posed logistical challenges and strained the already very limited resources at the Government's disposal. The financial crisis experienced by Egypt had depleted the country's foreign currency reserve, requiring the Government to place restrictions on the transfer of remittances by both Egyptian and foreign nationals in Egypt and abroad. As the financial situation had improved, those restrictions had been gradually lifted.

44. **A representative of Egypt** said that, if Egyptian nationals were arrested abroad, the arrested person themselves or, if necessary, a member of their family, could contact the Egyptian diplomatic mission or consulate in the country in question for assistance. Those offices could also assist Egyptian migrant workers by, *inter alia*, helping them to regularize their migration status, arranging their voluntary return to Egypt if necessary or issuing them with a new passport or national identity document or a copy of their birth certificate. The Government remained in constant contact with all its diplomatic and consular offices.

45. **A representative of Egypt** said that, while Egyptian anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling laws were robust, legal provisions alone were not always sufficient to deter traffickers and smugglers. National bodies and local associations working in that area needed to join forces to increase awareness among law enforcement personnel of the seriousness of those crimes. When cases of human trafficking or people smuggling came to light, a criminal investigation was launched and, if appropriate, prosecutions were brought. Statistical data on such cases were produced on a yearly basis.

46. **A representative of Egypt** said that expulsion decisions were issued on a case-by-case basis by the Ministry of the Interior on the recommendation of a special committee, which was advised by an administrative judge. Foreign nationals subject to expulsion were entitled to seek legal advice and to lodge an appeal against the expulsion decision. He was unaware of any collective expulsions having taken place at the country's borders.

47. Egypt regularly reviewed its position on the possible ratification of international human rights treaties to which it was not yet a party, which included the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. The country's national legal framework included provisions prohibiting enforced disappearance, and all necessary measures were taken to prevent the commission of that crime. He wished to point out, however, that many developed countries, too, had yet to ratify that instrument. In Egypt, sharia and national law coexisted. Family matters, such as inheritance, were governed by sharia law, whereas other matters were governed by relevant national laws. The Supreme Constitutional Court had a very clear understanding of how and when the principles of sharia law should be applied.

48. Regarding the consultations held in relation to the new asylum law, from 2019 onward, numerous meetings had taken place under the aegis of OHCHR to allow the Egyptian authorities to draw on experiences from elsewhere in the world and to ensure the alignment of Egyptian law with that of other countries. European bodies had also been consulted on rights-related matters. The new asylum law would be signed into law once the President of the Republic had given his approval. Opinion could be canvassed before the process of drafting the associated implementing decree began. At the suggestion of the Supreme Constitutional Court, Egyptian citizenship law had recently been amended to allow children born to an Egyptian mother and a foreign father to acquire Egyptian citizenship.

49. **A representative of Egypt** said that, in Egypt, children were placed in detention only as a last resort and only in a very limited set of circumstances. Every effort was made to keep them with their family or, failing that, to place them with a foster family or, in the case of migrant children, to place them with a trustworthy migrant family. However, if those alternatives were not viable, the children concerned were housed in a centre supervised by the competent national authorities. In Egypt, no birth went unregistered. If an administrative obstacle arose, the public prosecution authorities could issue a decision ordering the immediate registration of the child in question.

50. The joint unit for the protection of women against violence, while effective, was to be regarded as an exceptional measure to accelerate procedures and to provide all services in a one-stop unit. The judiciary, which received input from the National Council for Women, remained the main vehicle for protecting women from violence.

51. **A representative of Egypt** said that, under Act No. 213 of 2017 promulgating the Trade Unions Act, workers were entitled to join or withdraw from trade unions and to perform administrative functions within them. Licences were granted to private employment agencies by a special committee comprising members of trade unions and employers' organizations. The country's migration policy generally upheld the right of Egyptian workers to freedom of movement, including skilled professionals such as doctors, while responding to the needs of the Egyptian labour market. Doctors were offered a range of incentives to remain in Egypt. The activities of the Egyptian labour inspectorate had been strengthened through the hiring of additional inspectors and the introduction of mobile devices, such as tablets, to assist inspectors in their work.

52. **A representative of Egypt** said that Egypt was hosting around 100,000 of the 180,000 Palestinians who had passed through the Rafah border crossing, as well as 30,000 foreign nationals. It had provided primary care to 7,500 injured Palestinians and integrated care to a further 5,500, in addition to 25,000 accompanying persons. A number of those persons had subsequently been provided with shelter and, moreover, had received financial and in-kind support from Egyptian civil society organizations. Egypt had spent more than \$550 million on providing care and in-kind assistance, 80 per cent of which had benefited those affected by the crisis in Gaza.

53. Egypt had not closed the Rafah border crossing, which had been occupied and closed by Israel on 6 May 2024, nor had it charged any fees to Palestinians wishing to use it. While visa fees had been waived for Palestinians wishing to enter Egypt, special security arrangements remained in place in the Sinai Peninsula on account of the Egyptian security forces' six-year struggle against the Muslim Brotherhood, which was a terrorist organization. Since 2018, a fully licensed private company had been responsible for managing security-related matters in the region.

54. From November 2023 to the end of January 2024, the Egyptian Red Crescent had coordinated the transfer of injured and sick persons. From 27 January to 5 May 2024, a private company had assisted humanitarian actors in the field until Israel had occupied and closed the Rafah border crossing. The Egyptian Red Crescent had referred some 5,000 humanitarian cases to the Egyptian authorities for follow-up. Palestinians who had fled to Egypt did not need a residence permit and were allowed to open bank accounts and to enrol their children in Egyptian schools and universities at the same cost as Egyptian nationals. They also had the right to own and dispose of property in Egypt.

55. The country had received visits from the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, and from the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. The support provided by Egypt to Palestinians who had been forced to flee their homes had been documented in several reports. The Arab Organization for Human Rights, which was an Egyptian non-governmental organization, had fully documented all violations of the rights of Palestinians.

56. **Ms. Gahar** said that, while the State party was to be commended for the progress that it had made in discharging its obligations under the Convention, it was important that it adopt, without delay, an integrated, rights-based approach to migration that would enable it not only to better assess the current migration situation in the country but also to formulate practical recommendations conducive to enhancing the protection afforded to migrant workers and the members of their families. An effective strategy to assess the status of implementation of the Convention on the ground, which should include appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, was likewise essential. The State party should pursue its bilateral and multilateral cooperation initiatives with neighbouring countries and thus contribute to a collective response to the challenges posed by migration, particularly the significant migration flows caused by the armed conflicts in the Middle East. The establishment of regional solidarity networks could help to strengthen the protection of migrants' rights and ensure equal access to essential services. Crucially, the State party must ensure the participation of migrants and civil society organizations in the monitoring and evaluation of migration-related policies.

57. **Mr. Ceriani Cernadas** said that the Committee was grateful to the State party for having submitted its combined periodic reports after so many years and to the delegation for having taken part in the interactive dialogue with the Committee against such a challenging backdrop. Its presence demonstrated the State party's commitment to using human rights as a means to address the migration-related challenges that it was facing, thereby setting an example to other countries that, despite having greater resources at their disposal, had still not ratified the Convention.

58. Despite the achievements made by the State party, it needed to do more to align its national legal framework more fully with the Convention in terms of the recognition of the rights and the sustainable social inclusion of all foreign nationals, regardless of their migration or humanitarian status. Unfortunately, the seriousness of conflicts like those currently taking place in the Middle East often meant that many displaced persons could never return to their country of origin. Facilitating the regularization of the situation of migrants and granting them access to the labour market were therefore vital to ensure the protection of their rights and to promote social development. The State party must also remain vigilant against rising levels of xenophobia and anti-immigrant hate speech on social media networks, which was a blight on the society of nearly every country in the world.

59. **Mr. Babacar** said that, despite the difficult situation in the country, Egypt was to be commended for having sent such a large delegation to participate in the interactive dialogue with the Committee and for the valuable information that it had provided.

60. **A representative of Egypt** said that he wished to thank the Committee for the welcoming, professional and constructive spirit in which the interactive dialogue had taken place and for the opportunity to share additional information, which, he hoped, had given the Committee a comprehensive overview of the status of implementation of the Convention in his country. Egypt looked forward to receiving the Committee's concluding observations, which it would study closely.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.