



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

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## Committee against Torture Seventy-eighth session

### Summary record of the 2059th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 15 November 2023, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Heller

## Contents

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

*Fifth periodic report of Egypt (continued)*

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

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

*Fifth periodic report of Egypt (continued) (CAT/C/EGY/5; CAT/C/EGY/Q/5; CAT/C/EGY/Q/5/Add.1; CAT/C/EGY/RQ/5)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Egypt joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Egypt** said that, in addition to the adoption of Act No. 64 on trafficking in persons, the Government was conducting studies and developing operational strategies to tackle that phenomenon. A ministerial committee to address the issue had been established pursuant to a decree issued by the Prime Minister. It had 30 members, who represented various government bodies, including the National Council for Human Rights, the National Council for Women and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. In addition, the Ministry of the Interior had specialized units for combating organized crime, including trafficking in women and children.
3. To support the implementation of Act No. 64, training was provided for police officers, public prosecutors and judges through various institutions. The National Council for Human Rights worked with international partners, including United Nations agencies, to provide anti-trafficking training for other relevant personnel, including the staff of airports, health-care services, social welfare services, inspectorates and hotlines. Also with support from international partners, the authorities had produced a film to raise awareness of the different forms of trafficking in persons. Other awareness-raising campaigns were carried out as well, targeting both citizens and non-citizens.
4. Between January 2019 and March 2023, 442 persons had been arrested in connection with 236 cases of suspected trafficking in persons. The Public Prosecutor's Office kept data, disaggregated by gender and age, on the number of prosecutions, convictions and reports related to trafficking in persons. In recent years, the Government had given increasing consideration to efforts to protect vulnerable groups against trafficking in persons. It had established reporting hotlines within the National Council for Women, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and the National Council for Human Rights, and it promoted the hotlines among civil society organizations, migrant communities and social service providers. Interpretation services were available to complainants. All reports were recorded and, where appropriate, submitted to the national referral mechanism for trafficking in persons, which decided whether to submit cases for investigation and ensured that victims had access to physical protection services, including shelters. Victims were placed both in general women's and children's shelters and in specialized shelters for trafficking victims, the latter of which had been established throughout the country in cooperation with international partners. In addition to protection, the Government provided victims with services to support their reintegration into society, including vocational training.
5. Act No. 64 provided for the establishment of a fund to support victims of trafficking in persons. Agreement had been reached on the legal form that the fund should take, and discussions were under way to determine its budget. At the Government's request, the National Centre for Social and Criminological Research had drawn up guidance on the various forms of trafficking in persons. Trafficking in organs was prosecuted, and media campaigns had been conducted to raise awareness of such offences. As persons were driven by economic hardship to sell their organs, the Government provided support to vulnerable groups and persons working in the informal sector, including in the form of cash transfers.
6. Any person who experienced exploitation in the form of prostitution was considered a victim, not an offender. The Criminal Code set out the protections available to child victims of prostitution and the deterrent penalties applicable to persons found guilty of such forms of exploitation.
7. In 2021, the Government had produced an updated report on the social and economic drivers of homelessness among children, which contained recommendations regarding housing and income provision for children experiencing homelessness. The Protection Committee of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and the Ministry of Social

Solidarity were working to address those drivers. In addition, a study had recently been conducted on the phenomenon of temporary, or “transactional”, marriage. The study included data from six governorates and addressed trends and socioeconomic drivers. The Government was working with civil society organizations to tackle the issue.

8. The authorities were drafting a law to address the issues raised in the report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, on her mission to Egypt in 2010 ([A/HRC/17/35/Add.2](#)). They had accepted the Special Rapporteur’s recommendations regarding awareness-raising, data-gathering and cooperation with non-governmental organizations to tackle the root causes of trafficking. The Government was also working with the United Nations Children’s Fund to provide protection to children on the move.

9. **A representative of Egypt** said that the Public Prosecutor’s Office had conducted criminal investigations into the detention, torture and killing of the Italian citizen Giulio Regeni. Four police officers had been investigated in connection with the case, but no evidence had been found against them. The Public Prosecutor’s Office had published a report on its findings, in which it detailed all the judicial procedures carried out, including an autopsy, analysis of the victim’s clothing and mobile telephone records, examination of the site where the body had been found and the collection of statements from witnesses. The report contained a full analysis of the findings, including the factual and legal reasons for the conclusions reached; namely, that Mr. Regeni had been the victim of a robbery by a criminal gang, during which he had been injured. The Public Prosecutor’s Office had made clear that the presentation of allegations based on arbitrary evidence was unacceptable and did not comply with internationally recognized rules of criminal procedure and evidentiary standards or with basic principles such as the presumption of innocence. During the investigation, the Public Prosecutor’s Office had cooperated with various security institutions and foreign authorities, including the Italian judiciary. It had fulfilled various requests for mutual legal assistance from the Italian authorities and had participated in 15 bilateral meetings, which had resulted in the publication of a joint press release.

10. Under Egyptian law, the Public Prosecutor’s Office was responsible for providing judicial oversight over correctional and rehabilitation centres and detention centres throughout the country, in addition to overseeing the enforcement of sentences involving deprivation of liberty, in line with the relevant international standards. The Office conducted both periodic and unannounced inspections, as well as inspections in response to complaints. During inspections, it interviewed inmates about how they were treated, the material conditions of the facility, the medical care they received, whether they were allowed to receive visitors, opportunities for recreation and whether they received suitable financial compensation for any productive work performed.

11. The Office had published guidance and rules to support the correct enforcement of judicial orders, guide the classification of prisoners and prohibit detention without a judicial order. Its inspectors had the authority to enter any place of detention, meet with inmates, gather complaints and examine the facility’s records to ensure that inmates’ rights were being upheld. All complaints were investigated. In collaboration with international partners, the Office conducted continuous training for its staff on human rights protection.

12. The Directorate General for Human Rights of the Public Prosecutor’s Office reviewed the inspection reports produced by the Office, followed up on the latter’s investigations and conducted its own inspections of places of detention. It also investigated and followed up on reports received from the National Council for Human Rights.

13. With regard to women inmates, a committee of women judges had been appointed to conduct an extended, unannounced inspection of a correctional and rehabilitation centre for women in 10th of Ramadan City in October 2023. The inspection had included all areas of the facility, including residential areas, health-care facilities and nursery facilities. The inspectors had interviewed 133 inmates, including 57 inmates who had children living with them in the centre, to ensure that all facilities were age-appropriate. In addition, during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Directorate General for Human Rights had conducted an unannounced inspection of Al-Qanatir women’s prison to ensure that the relevant health measures were being followed and that inmates had access to vaccination.

The reports of both inspections were available on the website of the Public Prosecutor's Office. There were no unlawful places of detention or facilities outside the oversight of the Public Prosecutor's Office in Egypt.

14. The Code of Criminal Procedure governed the use of pretrial detention. All persons placed in pretrial detention were held in dedicated facilities. No one could be placed in pretrial detention without a written judicial order to that effect, which must specify the reasons for the detention, the length of the detention, the identity of the detainee, the alleged offence and the identity of the issuing officer. The law provided for alternatives to pretrial detention, such as placing persons under house arrest or obliging them to report regularly to a police station. Pretrial detention was subject to legal safeguards, such as the right to appeal against the judicial order within 30 days after its issuance. Act No. 153 of 2007 set out the maximum period of pretrial detention for each type of offence. All detentions in Egypt complied with the legal requirements. As soon as a person's placement in pretrial detention was no longer justified, the Public Prosecutor's Office issued the relevant release order.

15. There was a difference between solitary confinement as a disciplinary measure, which could be ordered by the director of the correctional facility, and temporary detention in an individual cell. All individual cells had a private toilet, a bed and other facilities necessary for the person's dignity. Prisoners held in individual cells had no contact with others except during legally mandated daily exercise periods, which could last up to two hours.

16. The Supreme State Security Prosecution was part of the Public Prosecutor's Office. It was a specialized agency responsible for investigating domestic and foreign offences against State security, as defined by law. It operated independently and without interference, and it investigated all complaints immediately. Complaints could be submitted via its digital portal, which was accessible to all.

17. The Public Prosecutor's Office took seriously any allegations of torture, ill-treatment, medical negligence or deaths in places of detention. It could open an investigation ex officio and initiate criminal proceedings upon receiving information that it deemed relevant; it was not necessary for victims to lodge a complaint. The Public Prosecutor's Office had dealt in that way with claims made in a 2021 video circulated on social media, alleging that acts of torture had been committed at Al-Salam police station in Cairo; the Office had ultimately found the allegations to be false. In the event of a death in custody, the victim was immediately identified, fellow prisoners were questioned and the body was examined by a panel of doctors, who produced a medical report indicating the cause of death. Information about allegations surrounding deaths in custody and measures taken by the Public Prosecutor's Office in response could be consulted on its website. Investigations into the deaths of 22 inmates at Badr Correctional and Rehabilitation Centre between March 2020 and 2023, which had included interviews with fellow prisoners and family members of the deceased, had established that neither torture nor the use of force had contributed to the deaths.

18. **A representative of Egypt** said that there was no contradiction between the country's commitments under the Convention and article 2 of the Constitution, under which Egyptian law was founded on the principles of the Islamic sharia. First, torture was not authorized or encouraged by any interpretation of sharia: the right to physical integrity was one of its fundamental principles. References to torture in Islamic texts did not relate to interactions between human beings but between the Creator and creations. Second, the criminal justice system prohibited physical harm and was based on the Criminal Code, which largely reflected historical European legal texts and international instruments such as the Convention. Since the scope of application of the detailed provisions of sharia was confined to matters of family law and inheritance law, the two systems were not incompatible. Third, the fact that Egypt had acceded to the Convention without any reservations indicated that the Convention was not considered to contradict any provisions of sharia. Fourth, article 3 of the Constitution stipulated that the religious law of non-Muslim faith communities provided the main source of legislation relating to the personal status of individuals belonging to those communities. Fifth, articles 93 and 151 of the Constitution applied to the Convention, as it was an international instrument.

19. Sixth, although the Supreme Constitutional Court had not directly invoked the Convention, since it was not empowered to do so under its mandate, the Court of Cassation had done so on several occasions. Seventh, the Supreme Constitutional Court was not specialized in interpreting sharia or the Constitution; it was restricted to a secular role by the preamble to that text. However, it could decide whether laws were constitutional or unconstitutional and, since its establishment in 1971, had developed an understanding of the “principles of Islamic sharia” referred to in article 2 of the Constitution as encompassing the inalienable and universal principles to which the delegation had referred at the Committee’s preceding meeting. Eighth, in order to avoid extremist interpretations of the Constitution that might be falsely claimed to arise from the Islamic sharia, the Constitution indicated that rulings by the Supreme Constitutional Court were to serve as the basis for interpreting sharia principles. Ninth, sharia principles had been applied by the Supreme Constitutional Court not only in the case involving Al-Az’har University but also in other cases, including case No. 99/34 in September 2023.

20. Under Act No. 137 of 2021, the Government was permitted to petition the Supreme Constitutional Court to confirm whether decisions by international bodies, courts and organizations met constitutional requirements. Human rights instruments, including the Convention, were among those constitutional requirements, pursuant to article 93 of the Constitution.

21. **A representative of Egypt** said that her Government’s positions in relation to international instruments, including the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, were a matter of national sovereignty and were reviewed periodically as part of an ongoing national dialogue. With respect to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, the Government monitored developments in best practices and adopted those that aligned with national frameworks. A number of mechanisms, including the National Council for Human Rights, the Public Prosecutor’s Office and parliamentary committees, helped to monitor and oversee correctional and rehabilitation centres, including by receiving and investigating complaints. The Government was committed to ensuring the efficacy and independence of those bodies.

22. The figure of 4,000 alleged cases of enforced disappearance was inflated. Since 1980, fewer than 900 such cases had been reported, approximately half of which had been resolved by the Government and half by other parties. A total of 275 cases remained in abeyance. The Public Prosecutor’s Office conducted investigations when there was sufficient proof. Some disappearances reported as enforced disappearances turned out to be the result of forced migration, affiliation with an Islamist or terrorist group or disappearance as a result of threats. At times, such allegations were made in order to harm the country’s reputation. Reports had revealed that some alleged victims of enforced disappearance had actually been killed in conflicts abroad or involved in acts of violence or terrorism. The Government was stepping up cooperation with regional and international mechanisms, including the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, to clarify the remaining cases. So far, more than 400 cases had been closed.

23. The Government cooperated with special procedures of the Human Rights Council. It was in the process of preparing invitations for them to visit the country, responded to their communications and remained open to all forms of cooperation with the Special Rapporteurs. The Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations Office at Geneva held regular meetings with Special Rapporteurs, who also provided technical expertise to Egyptian officials on the sidelines of sessions of the Human Rights Council.

24. Under plans launched in 2021, 5 correctional and rehabilitation centres for female prisoners had been built and 26 old prisons had been decommissioned. The new centres offered medical care and surgery, 5 had advanced medical equipment and 13 were dedicated to AIDS and hepatitis C treatment. Both male and female prisoners benefited from recreation time and family visits.

25. Mothers who were incarcerated had the right to care for their children of up to 4 years of age, and six facilities had been built to provide accommodation suitable for them. The health of pregnant prisoners was monitored at the facilities, breast cancer screenings were

conducted and personal hygiene products and meals were provided. Children living in the facilities were provided with food and health check-ups.

26. In order to help combat prison overcrowding, many women who had been imprisoned because of debts they had incurred in order to meet the needs of their families had been released. Their debts had been paid off by the State and they had received psychological support to help them reintegrate into society.

27. Imprisoning children under 15 years of age or holding them in police custody was prohibited by law. The Public Prosecutor's Office could instead either transfer a child to a specialist institution for a renewable one-week period or place the child under the responsibility of a parent to await trial. Children were not subject to the Criminal Code; alternative measures were taken, defined in consultation with their parents, including an official warning or placement in a social institution. Child detainees were given specialist support, received visits from their parents and continued their education during their detention. The detention of adults and minors in the same place was a criminal offence under Egyptian law.

28. Juvenile court judges had conducted 99 visits to social institutions and prisons in 2023 to ensure that the rights of children were being respected. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood had also made such visits. In 2020 a manual had been published in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to strengthen the juvenile justice system by prioritizing the best interests of the child and the protection of children from sexual exploitation and neglect.

29. The legal personality and administrative and financial independence of the National Council for Human Rights were protected by the Constitution. The Council, which was accredited with A status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, set its own internal rules and had an independent budget. Its activities included receiving complaints and referring them to the competent authorities, visiting places of detention, interviewing detainees and notifying the Public Prosecutor's Office of any rights violations. The Government was committed to following recommendations for strengthening its independence and effectiveness and took note of its opinions regarding the challenges it faced.

30. Police, military and civilian participants in peacekeeping operations received training, under the supervision of the Department of Peace Operations, on compliance with international human rights law, including the Convention against Torture. Egyptian peacekeeping contingents enjoyed a good reputation; they included legal advisers who evaluated the troops' performance and could recommend disciplinary measures, including expulsion from the peacekeeping contingent.

31. The armed forces had never recruited children in North Sinai or elsewhere in Egypt. The Government had taken a clear stance against such practices and the age of enlistment in the army was 18 years. There were no militia groups in the country.

32. **A representative of Egypt** said that, under provisions of Egyptian law, including articles 63 and 126 of the Criminal Code and articles 52 and 93 of the Constitution, superiors who ordered the commission of acts of torture were liable to the same penalties as the perpetrators of such acts, and subordinates could not invoke such an order from a superior as a justification of torture, which was an offence not subject to statutory limitation.

33. The Government was working to provide a comprehensive architecture for reparations that included provisions on restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition for victims of serious offences, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/147. Victims of torture were entitled to claim compensation before the criminal court investigating the case or separately before a civil court. It was not necessary for victims to file a criminal complaint in order to be able to bring a civil case. The term "victim" referred to both direct and indirect victims of torture, and the term "harm" included bodily, mental, psychological and economic harm, in addition to deprivation of the enjoyment of basic human rights. Prompt and suitable compensation was provided for torture or ill-treatment and was calculated on the basis of all financial harm suffered as a result of the offence, including current and future medical expenses and loss of potential income. There had been

26 final verdicts on compensation for torture or ill-treatment from the Court of Cassation in 2022, in addition to rulings from lower courts. With regard to satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition, the Egyptian Government was working to address the root causes of torture and ill-treatment, *inter alia* by ensuring that the Public Prosecutor's Office had full authority to conduct investigations and criminal proceedings, increasing oversight of prisons and detention centres and carrying out training and awareness-raising initiatives.

34. The definition of terrorism in Egyptian legislation was generally in line with the definition given in comparable laws and legal frameworks. It fulfilled the requirements of the relevant binding Security Council resolutions, such as resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1566 (2004). Defendants in counter-terrorism cases were afforded the same procedural safeguards as other defendants, including the presumption of innocence and the inadmissibility of any evidence obtained through torture or ill-treatment. Individuals arrested on suspicion of terrorism were not held in incommunicado detention. In accordance with article 54 of the Constitution, suspects could be held in pretrial detention for a maximum of 24 hours, and only on the grounds of criminal suspicion. The pretrial detention period could be extended by a maximum of 14 days, renewable once. Suspects could only be held in places of detention that were under judicial supervision and they must be informed of their rights, including their right to remain silent, to have access to counsel and to communicate with relatives regarding their detention.

35. Under article 198 of the Constitution, lawyers worked with the judiciary in upholding the rule of law and ensuring the rights of defendants. Act No. 147 of 2019 had increased the resources allocated to the Bar Association and enhanced measures to safeguard the independence of lawyers, including the creation of a dedicated academy, the prohibition of unauthorized searches of lawyers' offices and the introduction of certain requirements that must be met before criminal proceedings could be undertaken against a lawyer.

36. The Court of Cassation had annulled trials that had been conducted without the assistance of a lawyer or where the lawyer had failed to exercise a proper defence. Legal aid and legal consultation services were provided through legal clinics for individuals who could not afford a lawyer. Around 600 pro bono lawyers, as well as non-governmental and similar organizations, offered free legal assistance to women. The code of conduct for prosecutors stipulated that legal assistance must be made available to all witnesses and defendants.

37. Under article 204 of the Constitution, civilians could be tried before military courts only in cases involving attacks on facilities or personnel of the armed forces. The Supreme Constitutional Court had established a number of requirements and standards, including due process guarantees, in respect of trials of civilians before military courts.

38. **Mr. Tuzmukhamedov** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would appreciate further clarification of the status of the Convention in the Egyptian legal system, particularly in relation to ordinary laws. He would like to know whether the Convention was deemed to be complementary to the Constitution and, if so, by what procedure that complementarity had been established.

39. He wondered what specific measures were provided for in Egyptian law to ensure that all acts of torture were punishable by appropriate penalties, including acts that did not consist of physical abuse and acts committed by someone other than an agent of the State at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It would be of interest to the Committee to know the number of police, security and military personnel who had faced criminal investigation for alleged torture or ill-treatment over the reporting period, how many of those investigations had resulted in administrative action or criminal prosecutions and convictions, and what sentences had been imposed. He would welcome information on the status of detainees and victims who had filed complaints, or on whose behalf complaints had been filed, that had resulted in investigation. In which general, military or Constitutional court proceedings had the courts invoked the Convention?

40. He would appreciate a response to his earlier questions on military jurisdiction, particularly those relating to Act No. 136/2014, which had extended military jurisdiction to offences perpetrated against public facilities, utilities and properties.

41. He wished to know whether references to hard labour had been removed from all pieces of legislation, how many individuals were currently on death row, how many of them had filed appeals and what the statistics were for successful and unsuccessful appeals in capital cases. It would be useful to know whether the State party had developed a methodology to assess the effectiveness of training and education programmes in reducing the number of cases of torture and ill-treatment and, if so, whether it could share the conclusions and lessons learned from such evaluations with the Committee.

42. **Mr. Iscan** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would like to hear the State party's response to allegations of unnecessary and excessive use of lethal force and mass arrests during the large-scale demonstrations that had taken place in recent years. It would be useful to receive data on the investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated and sentences handed down in such cases. The Committee would also appreciate data on the use of weapons, equipment and devices that were capable of inflicting torture and ill-treatment, including batons, tear gas, rubber or foam bullets, water cannons, striking and kinetic impact weapons, electric shock weapons (tasers), dazzling lights and lasers. It would welcome information on the measures taken to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence.

43. The Committee would be interested to know whether the State party allowed all detained individuals seeking or in need of international protection to have access to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) so that they could submit a claim for refugee status and whether such persons were allowed to stay in the country until their claim for international protection had been examined. He wondered whether the State party preserved family unity by not expelling asylum-seekers who, while not registered themselves, had family members who were registered with UNHCR. He would like to hear the State party's position on allegations that individuals seeking or in need of international protection had been denied access to UNHCR and removed to territories where they were at risk of ill-treatment. The Committee would like to receive data on the number of asylum applications submitted and the number of persons who had been extradited or expelled to their country of origin.

44. **Ms. Racu** said that she would like to know whether the State party had taken legislative measures to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, including the home, alternative care settings and schools. She would also welcome information on the steps taken to investigate cases of corporal punishment of children and to raise awareness of non-violent, positive forms of discipline.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.55 p.m. and resumed at 5.10 p.m.*

45. **A representative of Egypt** said that Egypt hosted more than 410,000 asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR. The Government had proposed a bill to create a standing committee to ensure that refugees were provided with the necessary care and support. The bill would prohibit the extradition of refugees to their country of origin and would exempt asylum-seekers from legal liability if they had entered the country illegally to save their lives.

46. The Supreme Administrative Court extended the principle of non-refoulement to refugees on humanitarian grounds. Egypt did not expel refugees from its territory, even if they were in an irregular situation. If a refugee posed a threat to national security, the authorities worked with UNHCR to find a suitable third country. Refugees who were arrested because of their irregular status were released if they registered with UNHCR in order to regularize their status.

47. Concerning the preservation of family unity, Act No. 89 of 1960 set out the conditions of residence for asylum-seekers whose applications were rejected but who had family members registered with UNHCR. Such persons could appeal against the decision to reject their asylum application. In 2010, the Supreme Administrative Court had issued a decision to freeze deportation proceedings in line with articles 31, 32 and 33 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and article 13 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

48. Egypt had no detention centres for refugees and migrants, in accordance with the constitutional guarantee of freedom of movement. It upheld the rights of refugees and

asylum-seekers in line with the 1951 Convention, for example by facilitating communication channels with UNHCR so that refugees and asylum-seekers did not have to file their applications in person.

49. **A representative of Egypt** said that Egyptian law regulated the use of force by law enforcement officials to disperse crowds of more than five individuals. The Code on Public and Peaceful Assemblies allowed law enforcement officials to restore order in cases where individuals committed offences punishable by law or where assemblies were not peaceful. The officials were first required to call on the crowd to leave the premises, while ensuring that safe exit routes were available. If the crowd did not comply, officials could use tear gas and water cannons to disperse the assembly. If individuals committed acts of violence or vandalism, officials could fire warning shots and then fire rubber bullets. Should the demonstrators use firearms against the officials, the latter would have the right to act in legitimate self-defence in proportion to the danger posed. Handbooks and guidelines on the use of force in line with international standards had been distributed to the security forces and judicial staff to promote human rights and their protection, as well as the protection of public property and individuals.

50. **A representative of Egypt**, referring to the allegations of excessive use of force by the security forces, said that between 10 November 2019 and 1 May 2023, 769 cases had been referred to the disciplinary courts, 380 had resulted in a conviction, 4 had resulted in acquittal, 363 had been closed and 22 were under discussion. In parallel, 222 cases had been referred to the criminal courts, 24 had resulted in a conviction and 6 had resulted in acquittal. A total of 164 cases had led to imprisonment and 28 were under discussion.

51. **A representative of Egypt**, referring to the questions asked about gender-based violence, said that Egypt had submitted information to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on follow-up to that committee's concluding observations on the country's combined eighth to tenth periodic reports ([CEDAW/C/EGY/FCO/8-10](#)). Egyptian law criminalized all forms of violence against women, including harassment, rape and female genital mutilation, whether it occurred inside or outside the home. All forms of domestic violence were punishable under the Criminal Code, regardless of the degree of violence involved. A bill had been introduced in 2022 to stiffen penalties for violence against women and girls, a 2021 Prime Ministerial decree had created a special unit to facilitate victims' access to services and a model for a national referral system for cases of violence against women had been developed. A code of conduct was in place to ensure that workplaces were safe for women. Three forensic medicine units dealt with cases of rape and indecent assault, and prosecutors had a handbook on how to effectively respond to cases of violence against women. A number of shelters were available for women victims of violence; in November 2020 a shelter had been opened for women and girls who had been victims of trafficking in persons. The National Council for Women received complaints through its hotline for reporting cases of violence against women and referred the complaints to the competent authorities. Over a five-year period, it had counselled some 100,000 women over the hotline. Its complaints office had assisted women in 10,000 court cases. Awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women were conducted on social media, in schools and through door-to-door campaigns.

52. The Children's Act prohibited the corporal punishment of children. Complaints of corporal punishment received through the dedicated hotline established in 2005 were reported to the Public Prosecutor's Office. An October 2022 circular from the Ministry of Education prohibited practices that inflicted physical harm on children in schools, including bullying. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood conducted campaigns with international institutions to raise public awareness of the prohibition of physical punishment.

53. **A representative of Egypt** said that, in the Egyptian legal system, the Convention had the same status as domestic legislation but a lower status than the Constitution. The Convention applied to all citizens, regardless of their religion. The penalty of hard labour had been abolished under Act No. 95 of 2003. Act No. 136 of 2014, as amended, provided that critical utilities such as water and electricity distribution systems should be considered military assets, given that such utilities had been targeted by terrorist groups. It set out the conditions for the trial, under the oversight of the Supreme Constitutional Court, of persons suspected of such offences; many such cases had been referred to a criminal court.

54. Training programmes for judges at the National Centre for Judicial Studies were assessed on the basis of participant surveys, impact assessments using the Kirkpatrick model and reviews of the feedback that participants subsequently received on their performance at work. In cooperation with UNODC and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), six training sessions on combating torture and violence against women had been held for Egyptian forensic doctors, of whom there were 60, between January 2020 and January 2023. The topic of ill-treatment had been addressed in 47 internal training sessions for the police force that had been organized with international partners. In addition, 55 training sessions on trafficking in persons and illegal migration had been held between 2019 and 2023. Training programmes for law enforcement officials were evaluated by the academic and scientific committees of the relevant institutions.

55. The Committee's deliberations in its inquiry on Egypt under article 20 of the Convention, as described in its report on the work of its fifty-eighth, fifty-ninth and sixtieth sessions (A/72/44), should have considered the fact that the events that had led to the opening of the inquiry had occurred under a regime that the people of Egypt had subsequently rejected. The Government's decision not to agree to the visit requested by the Committee in 2014, which was noted in that report, had been due to concerns about the Committee members' safety, as a series of terrorist attacks targeting government ministers, government buildings and public infrastructure had taken place in Egypt that year.

56. The Egyptian Government had, however, taken steps to combat torture in line with its international obligations; submitted its fifth periodic report to the Committee, albeit with a delay; responded to the list of issues in relation to that periodic report; and come before the Committee to answer its questions. The Government had also engaged constructively with special procedure mandate holders and responded to the communications that it had received. At the domestic level, a number of measures had been taken to guard against torture; for example, detainees were informed in writing of their rights, including the right to communicate with their relatives, and judicial inspections of places of detention were conducted. The Government was developing interrogation methods that used modern technologies and had taken steps to digitalize complaint mechanisms. Persons accused of involvement in acts of torture were given speedy and fair trials; those found guilty received hefty sentences and faced disciplinary penalties, including dismissal. Disciplinary action had been taken in 769 reported cases of ill-treatment, and 222 cases had been referred to criminal courts. Between 2015 and 2020, administrative proceedings had been initiated in 60 cases of ill-treatment. Between 2020 and 2023, 442 persons had been convicted in 336 cases of trafficking in persons, and between 2019 and 2023, 1,250 persons had been convicted in 1,030 cases of illegal migration.

57. **A representative of Egypt** said that, under articles 35 and 36 of the Criminal Code, a person convicted of two counts of an offence that carried different penalties owing to the presence of aggravating and mitigating circumstances must serve only the sentence for the aggravated count. By law, the time spent in prison by persons serving multiple sentences for felony offences that amounted to more than 20 years' imprisonment was limited to 20 years, and persons convicted of multiple misdemeanours served no more than 6 years. Decisions regarding the commutation of such sentences were made by the sentence enforcement department of the Public Prosecutor's Office.

58. **Mr. Buchwald** said that he wished to know whether, under domestic law, a superior officer would be liable for acts of subordinates not ordered by and not known to the superior if the officer should have been aware of the possibility that those acts were occurring and should have taken action to stop them.

59. **A representative of Egypt** said that articles 39 and 40 of the Criminal Code provided for the liability of any person with a duty to act who failed to act and thereby allowed an offence to occur. Senior officials who, owing to their supervisory duties, should have known that an offence was being committed in the institution that they oversaw would be held liable for the offence.

60. **Mr. Gamaleldin** (Egypt) said it was important for civil society, lawyers and State institutions to be actively involved in strengthening the rule of law, eliminating all forms of torture and increasing victims' confidence in the justice system. The implementation of the

Convention was overseen through a participatory process in which all government agencies and non-governmental organizations took part. The Government recognized the need for awareness-raising and capacity-building and was addressing it under the National Human Rights Strategy. The Government was committed to the periodic reporting process.

61. **Mr. El Bakly** (Egypt) said that, in responding to the Committee's questions, the delegation had sought to use statistical data to illustrate the practical steps taken by the Government, highlight the joint efforts involving government agencies, civil society organizations, United Nations mechanisms and international partners and underscore the high-level political will behind those efforts. He welcomed Committee members' use of the term "allegations" in their questions, as exaggerated reports containing inflated figures had been circulated by anonymous sources seeking to undermine the State's efforts to uphold human rights. Going forward, the Government would continue to develop the country's correctional and rehabilitation centres, update the rules governing those centres, encourage civil society organizations and lawyers to work with the Government to provide legal aid services, raise public officials' awareness of issues relating to torture and ill-treatment and advance the process of digitalization in the justice system.

*The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.*