



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Summary record of the 3036th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 30 November 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 fifteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of Viet Nam (continued)
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1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Viet Nam joined the meeting.*
2. **Ms. Ali Al-Misnad** (Country Rapporteur) said that she would welcome information on any recent educational initiatives to combat prejudice, promote tolerance and raise awareness of racial discrimination and the rights enshrined in the Convention, as well as on the impact of those initiatives. It would be useful to know whether human rights, including the right to freedom from racial discrimination, were included in school curricula. She wished to know whether measures had been taken to address the lack of acknowledgement of the existence of racial discrimination and inequality between ethnic groups, and whether those measures had had an impact. The delegation was invited to indicate whether media professionals, law enforcement, the judiciary, lawyers and public officials had undergone training on racial discrimination and the rights enshrined in the Convention. She wondered whether the State party offered any guarantees of protection against intimidation and reprisals for individuals who engaged with the United Nations human rights mechanisms and United Nations officials.
3. The delegation was invited to inform the Committee of any recent or ongoing development projects in which consultations had been held with ethnic minority groups. How were those consultations conducted?
4. She would like the delegation to provide information on any existing or planned quotas for the representation of ethnic minority groups on the Central Committee of the Communist Party and at the local level. It would be interesting to learn what steps the State party had taken to increase the representation of ethnic minority women among government cadres. How did the government ensure that persons who held public, political or decision-making positions were appointed and recognized by the communities that they represented?
5. Given the high levels of poverty persisting among minority ethnic groups despite the implementation of a range of poverty reduction initiatives, she would welcome further details on the impact of those initiatives. She invited the delegation to outline the challenges encountered and lessons learned during the implementation of the National Target Programme on Socioeconomic Development in Ethnic Minority Areas, 2021–2025. The Committee had received reports that there were around 30 United Nations projects that would deal with issues affecting minority groups and that were pending approval from the Government. It would be useful to know whether any measures had been taken to address historic persecution of the Khmer Krom minority. In the light of reports that ethnic minority children had a lower school completion rate and a higher school drop-out rate than the children of the Kinh majority, she said that she would like to know why satellite schools for ethnic minority children had been closed and replaced with boarding schools in remote areas. She wondered whether parents had provided consent for their children to be taken to such schools and whether the negative impact of removing children from their families and culture had been studied. The delegation was invited to comment on reports of bullying in those boarding schools. Given the State party's plans to broaden language teaching, she wished to know which languages were still not being taught in schools, and why.
6. The Committee would welcome information on the conditions for the registration of religious associations or organizations and the reasons for those conditions. It would like to receive updated statistics on the number of requests for registration of religious associations and the proportion approved. Could decisions to refuse such registration be appealed? It would be useful to find out whether any guarantees were in place to ensure that registration requirements were not arbitrarily applied.
7. **Ms. Chung** (Country Task Force) said that she would like to know whether the State party would consider acknowledging the existence and the rights of Indigenous Peoples in

Viet Nam and ratifying the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) of the International Labour Organization. She would like the delegation to comment on the fact that the Montagnard, Hmong and Khmer Krom peoples identified themselves as Indigenous Peoples. It would be useful to learn whether any measures had been taken or were envisaged to promote self-identification for Indigenous groups. The Committee would appreciate it if the delegation would comment on reports that the Government had confiscated ancestral lands from Indigenous Peoples and would provide specific information on any compensation provided to them when their lands had been acquired by the Government. Did mechanisms exist to guarantee that communities potentially affected by development projects were consulted with a view to obtaining their free, prior and informed consent? She would like the delegation to comment on reports that the forest lands allocated to Indigenous communities were isolated, mostly not productive and located in rocky, mountainous areas.

8. The Committee had received information that Vietnamese nationals had been trafficked to Cambodia, where they were forced to work in so-called scam compounds, engaging in financial fraud and online love scams. It would be of interest to the Committee to know whether any similar compounds existed in Viet Nam and to find out how many of the Vietnamese victims of trafficking in persons belonged to ethnic minority groups. The Committee would appreciate it if the delegation could outline measures taken to investigate all instances of trafficking in persons, to prosecute and appropriately punish traffickers and to provide redress and assistance to trafficking victims. It would also welcome an indication of the measures taken to combat trafficking and protect victims, in particular those from ethnic minority groups residing in border areas.

9. The Committee had received reports that many people from ethnic minority groups, including the Montagnard and Hmong Indigenous Peoples, had been effectively rendered stateless as a result of a refusal to register them in the civil registry or because of displacement following religious persecution. Had the State party adopted any measures to support such stateless persons? It would also be useful to know how the State party combated statelessness among children whose households were not registered with the authorities. Information would be appreciated on the implementation of the Law on Residence, including with regard to the household registration system and access to basic services for non-citizens and unregistered households.

10. She would welcome statistics on the migrant workers present in Viet Nam, disaggregated by nationality, gender and age, along with information on any policies or practices that discriminated against migrant workers in terms of wages or working conditions. With regard to undocumented migrant workers, she would like to know whether any measures were taken to regularize their status and whether there was a universal birth registration system that would enable them to register the birth of their children. The Committee would like to know whether there were complaint mechanisms available for non-citizens. The delegation was invited to provide information on refugees who arrived in Viet Nam and to indicate whether any policies were being drawn up for the reception of refugees and asylum-seekers.

11. The Committee would find it useful to receive statistics on the number of children of Vietnamese mothers and foreign fathers in the country, with an indication of their age, nationality and socioeconomic situation. She wished to know whether such children were guaranteed their right to access basic services and whether they were eligible for Vietnamese citizenship. Did the State party permit dual citizenship? The delegation was invited to indicate whether the regulations that provided for access to secondary and tertiary education for children of foreign nationals were fully enforced throughout the country.

12. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that she would like to know whether policies that focused on ethnic minority children included indicators, targets and specific budgets to address problems such as stunting and the provision of sanitation services. It would be of interest to find out whether nutritional policies were in place to ensure access to health care for the children and pregnant women of those minorities. It would also be useful to know what measures had been taken to ensure access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene services in rural areas, and how the effectiveness of those measures was assessed. In the light of reports of unequal access to medicine and vaccines during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, she would like

the delegation to provide data on the distribution of vaccines throughout the country, especially in areas inhabited by minority groups.

13. **Ms. Tebie** said that, according to the periodic report, the President had allowed 3,751 people to obtain Vietnamese nationality and 79 people to regain Vietnamese nationality. She would like the delegation to provide more detailed and updated statistics on naturalized persons, disaggregated by country of origin. It would be interesting to learn whether foreign husbands of Vietnamese women had the right to obtain Vietnamese nationality. The Committee would also like to find out whether children of unknown parentage were granted Vietnamese nationality, and if so, how many had received it. She wished to know if there had been any progress towards establishing an agreement on migration with the Lao People's Democratic Republic, as mentioned in paragraph 63 of the periodic report. Might similar agreements be concluded with other countries?

14. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that he would like the delegation to explain the reasons underlying discrimination against the Montagnard people.

15. **Mr. Diaby** said that he wished to know whether the State party might consider ratifying the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and whether there was a national plan to eradicate statelessness. It would be interesting to learn how many people of African descent resided in Viet Nam and whether any action was being taken to mark the International Decade for People of African Descent. The Committee would also like to hear the delegation's comments about reports of the sterilization of women from minority ethnic groups.

16. **Mr. Amir** said that he wished to remind his fellow Committee members of the need to take the State party's difficult history into account when considering its efforts to address racial discrimination.

17. **Mr. Payandeh** said that it would be helpful to hear specifically about the impact of the measures taken to support the socioeconomic development of minority groups and how those measures were assessed. He would like to know what had been done to involve minority groups in the development, implementation and evaluation of such measures.

The meeting was suspended at 10.50 a.m. and resumed at 11.05 a.m.

18. **Mr. Y Thong** (Viet Nam) said that the term "Indigenous Peoples" was not used in the State party, for historical reasons linked to the period of French colonial rule. The descriptions preferred by his Government were "ethnic minorities" and "ethnic minorities with a particularly small population". The term "Montagnard" was used to refer to five different peoples living in the country's central highlands. It was important for the Committee to understand what terminology should be employed.

19. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that all individuals, including those belonging to ethnic minorities, had the right to access justice and to provide input on public policies and programmes. The Government was seeking to improve the inclusiveness, openness and transparency of its policymaking process, and it encouraged members of the public to submit their own recommendations. The 2015 Law on the Promulgation of Legal Documents established the requirement for policymakers to conduct an assessment of the impact of all proposed policies. The Viet Nam Fatherland Front was responsible for enabling all individuals and groups in society to participate in the drafting of laws; it conducted surveys and held consultations with relevant groups to gain an understanding of the views and needs at the grassroots level and to provide those groups with a way of engaging in direct dialogue with lawmakers and government officials. Efforts were made to provide an immediate response to any suggestions submitted by the population and to clearly explain the content of draft laws and policies to local communities and ethnic minority groups.

20. A law containing provisions on legal assistance for the poor and for ethnic minorities living in mountainous and disadvantaged areas had been adopted. Some 13,000 requests for such assistance had been submitted between 2016 and 2023. Special legal assistance was offered to a total of 17 groups, and the authorities gave immediate attention to complaints filed by those groups. Legal assistance centres had been established in all communes. The Government ran campaigns to help individuals, particularly members of ethnic minorities in disadvantaged areas, to understand the laws and policies relevant to their rights and interests

and the legal assistance available to them. As part of those campaigns, about 13 million leaflets on legal assistance had been distributed to members of ethnic minorities.

21. A hotline set up to provide legal assistance to the poor had received over 7,000 calls, and a website offering information and training courses on legal assistance was available in the languages spoken by ethnic minorities. Laws had been passed to ensure that members of ethnic minorities and defendants in death penalty proceedings had access to a defence lawyer. Training in protecting the rights of ethnic minorities had been provided to staff working in the judiciary and to lawyers, and also to 171 officials in mountainous and disadvantaged areas.

22. The Ministry of Justice was the main body responsible for addressing documentation issues faced by migrants, stateless individuals and children of foreigners living in Viet Nam. It had published guidelines for addressing the problems faced by members of unregistered households in vulnerable situations. Steps had been taken to facilitate the acquisition of Vietnamese nationality by children of marriage migrants who had returned to the country, stateless individuals and individuals who had previously renounced their Vietnamese citizenship. The 2018 Law on Vietnamese Nationality provided that stateless individuals without identity documents who had been residing in Viet Nam for at least 20 years prior to the law's entry into effect were eligible for Vietnamese citizenship. Some 1,500 requests for naturalization under that law had been submitted to the Prime Minister by the Ministry of Justice. Of those, 77 had already been processed, and a further 300 were due to be considered shortly. The Government recognized dual nationality only in exceptional circumstances; Vietnamese children adopted by foreigners, for instance, were entitled to retain their Vietnamese citizenship and become dual citizens. Viet Nam was party to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and was making plans for its implementation.

23. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that the Government had reformed the school curriculum in 2017 and, as part of those efforts, had issued an official decision to incorporate human rights content, including content on the prevention of racial discrimination, into the curriculum at all levels of education. Teachers were provided with human rights teaching materials and received training in delivering human rights education from experts in the field. Some teachers had travelled abroad to study at institutions specializing in human rights education. Content on human rights, including the prevention of racial discrimination, had been incorporated into subjects such as history, literature and civics. The Prime Minister and other political figures had expressed their support for the initiative, thereby raising awareness of it within the education sector, and teachers' understanding of human rights had significantly improved as a result of the activities that had been organized. Assessments of human rights education were carried out by a number of bodies, including the Ministry of Education.

24. The most recent statistics available showed that 59 per cent of students from ethnic minorities attended upper secondary school. The Government had taken certain steps to increase that rate further. It had waived 70 per cent of the school fees for students from certain groups and had allocated a monthly lunch allowance, equivalent to \$30, for children who lived far from their schools, to spare them from having to travel back home to eat. Efforts were made to ensure that students from 16 ethnic minorities with particularly small populations were able to attend the secondary schools and universities of their choice, with a view to encouraging them to complete their studies.

25. Infrastructural improvements in rural and mountainous areas meant that it was easier for students in those areas to attend standard schools, thus reducing the need for satellite schools. Satellite schools had also been closed because they offered a lower quality of education than standard schools. Students' and communities' views and interests were taken into account when decisions were taken about the possible closure of satellite schools. Students from ethnic minorities who lived far from a satellite school were able to attend boarding schools, with their parents' permission. The Government considered that the establishment of boarding schools represented a good way of increasing the percentage of students from ethnic minorities who remained in education and was working to ensure that such schools offered good living conditions.

26. Policies for the teaching and preservation of minority languages were being implemented systematically. There were 32 nationalities in Viet Nam, each with its own spoken and written language, of which 15 were taught in schools. Khmer was the most widely taught minority language. Education in Khmer was available in a number of provinces in the south of the country. Statistics on the number of students and schools would subsequently be provided in writing.

27. A circular had been issued containing provisions on access to education for the children of foreign workers, including on language competency. However, its provisions had not yet been implemented in all provinces. In most cases, education was provided only in Vietnamese, so not all schools would be able to cater to the needs of children who did not speak that language. Educational establishments that provided teaching in other languages were mainly located in large cities.

28. **Mr. Y Thong** (Viet Nam) said that he was from a minority group and had been educated at boarding schools for minorities, which had prepared him for future success.

29. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that all religions were equal before the law and the right to freedom of belief, faith and religion of all peoples was enshrined in domestic legislation, including the Constitution. The freedom of all religious organizations to carry out their activities was established in a decree on the implementation of the Law on Belief and Religion. Since the approval of that law, 165 training courses on its provisions had been organized for thousands of civil servants, with the participation of over 200 religious dignitaries and a very large number of adherents of various religions. Since the enforcement of the law, more than a thousand new religious organizations had been registered, bringing the total to around 3,600.

30. In compliance with the Law on Belief and Religion, efforts were made to create favourable conditions for religious practices, with a focus on the religious activities of minority groups, notably the Cham people. Millions of copies of core religious texts were in circulation in 21 minority languages. The establishment of a Theravada Buddhism Academy had provided better conditions for the work and studies of Buddhist monks and nuns. Favourable conditions for the teachings of Theravada Buddhism, particularly in southern Viet Nam and among Khmer followers of that faith, had been established, and more than 100 students were pursuing studies in Theravada Buddhism abroad. There had been efforts to help imams and Muslims travel to other countries to celebrate major Islamic festivals. Individuals were never forced to renounce their religious beliefs and were permitted to engage in regular worship and practice. Many religious festivals were celebrated in the wider community, such as Christmas and Vesak.

31. Religious organizations could file for official registration when they were able to comply with existing requirements relating to their name, rituals and religious practice. Such organizations were not permitted to choose a name coinciding with the names of other religions or the names of Vietnamese national heroes. As long as the requirements were met, the members of the clergy of the various faiths were able to work in and teach their religions.

32. Conflicts between religious institutions occasionally resulted from circumstances at the local level or inconsistencies in the application of laws when civil servants lacked awareness of the legal provisions. Training courses were provided as a remedy. Local governments were often reminded of their responsibility to comply strictly with laws and policies promulgated at the central level. When violations of rights on religious grounds were reported at the local level, the Government discussed the matter with the local authorities.

33. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that the country was a party to conventions or involved in mechanisms on migration at the regional level, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, the ASEAN Plan of Action for Cooperation on Immigration Matters, the ASEAN Declaration on the Placement and Protection of Migrant Fishers and the ASEAN Declaration of Protection of Migrant Workers and Family Members in Crisis Situations. There were no plans to develop a national law on refugees, but the Government was taking steps to implement the Global Compact on Refugees. Over the previous year, the Government had worked closely with United Nations agencies to provide humanitarian aid

to over 300 Sri Lankan nationals who had been involved in incidents at sea, and it had helped the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to identify the people in that group who were seeking protection.

34. Annual training courses on the provisions of the Convention and other human rights instruments were organized for employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who were soon to be posted abroad and for the Ministry's newly recruited staff. Training courses on conduct in multicultural and multi-ethnic working environments and on the prevention of racial discrimination were also available.

35. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that consultations for development projects were carried out through bottom-up discussions with project beneficiaries, who were involved in the drafting and implementation stages. Programme No. 135 on poverty reduction, mentioned in the periodic report, was among the initiatives that had used that approach; it had secured support from more than 10 international donors and contained provisions to ensure a gender balance in its development and implementation process. International organizations had suggested that the bottom-up model should be rolled out to developing and least developed countries in the region, as a best practice. The implementation of policies on matters related to ethnic minorities had been positive and had helped Viet Nam to become a middle-income country.

36. Efforts had been made to ensure access to clean water and basic health-care services, especially for women and children. Significant financial resources from the State budget and international assistance had been allocated to improve hygiene and clean water provision in certain provinces. The success of those measures had been recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and 97 per cent of households now had access to clean water. Rural infrastructure had also been greatly improved. Many people, especially women, had begun to offer accommodation in their homes to cater to increased numbers of domestic and international tourists. Road connections between villages had also been strengthened.

37. The percentage of deputies in the National Assembly who were from ethnic minority groups was approximately 17 per cent. However, the number of members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party from ethnic minorities remained low. People from ethnic minority groups had been elected to People's Councils nationwide. In areas where they formed the majority of the population, they accounted for up to 90 per cent of elected officials.

38. Private consultations with local communities had been carried out on the allocation of forest land to Indigenous communities. The productivity of the forest lands varied by region and depended on the quality of their soil. Persons who had been resettled to those areas could receive vocational training to help them earn a living.

39. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that, since 2020, the Ministry of Public Security had conducted 6 national training courses on human rights for people working in the field of human rights and 14 human rights courses at the local level. The courses contained information on the Convention and on how to guarantee the rights of ethnic minorities. There had also been 14 training courses for teachers and students of the People's Police Academy, with a focus on prison staff. The courses were intended to be held annually.

40. The Government had strengthened its efforts to combat trafficking in persons, including through targeted legislation. The number of cases of trafficking had thus declined sharply and the government anti-trafficking action plan for 2021–2025 would continue to be promoted. A national day had been established to raise awareness of trafficking. Efforts to combat trafficking included the creation of residents' identity cards and a national residents database, as well as increased monitoring of the border regions where most cases of trafficking occurred. The peak period for trafficking was between July and September. The authorities had successfully dismantled trafficking rings. Between 2018 and 2023, hundreds of trafficking cases had been uncovered, involving more than 800 victims. Most of the victims were female and over 16 years of age.

41. Victims of trafficking were entitled to receive access to vocational training, mental health services and legal assistance, as well as financial aid. More than 400 social protection

centres had been established to provide victims with support, and training courses on trafficking had been organized for border guards. The police force had been working closely with the Cambodian authorities to address the trafficking of Vietnamese citizens to the so-called scam compounds. Viet Nam had no scam compounds and was unlikely to become a destination country for trafficking. Thousands of businesses had been inspected by the police in connection with efforts to prevent trafficking in persons.

42. Under the Law on Residence, household registrations had been replaced with identity cards and a national database on residents in order to simplify procedures for the public and create transparency. There were more than 1 million temporary residents in the country, as well as thousands of people who did not meet the requirements for obtaining legal documents.

43. The majority of stateless people in Viet Nam were people from Cambodia, of Vietnamese origin, and had no legal documents to prove their citizenship or place of residence. The Prime Minister had issued a decision to allow the Ministry of Public Security to provide documents for such people to enable them to integrate into local society and obtain Vietnamese citizenship.

44. A proposed law on identity cards recently endorsed by the National Assembly would *inter alia* provide for the issuance of cards to Vietnamese citizens under 14 years of age and to people of Vietnamese origin living in the country whose citizenship was undetermined. It would also enable stateless persons to access social services.

45. The internal migration of Hmong people from northern to central Viet Nam had created problems with the issuance of birth certificates. When families failed to register legally in their new place of residence, their children often had no birth certificates or means of obtaining them. Despite the lack of documentation, the local authorities allowed those children to attend school and access health-care services. The Government was working closely with the relevant regions to gather information and provide guidance so that the persons in question would be able to complete the necessary procedures to obtain birth certificates. The delegation considered that the Committee's estimate of the size of the Hmong population was excessively high. It would appreciate it if the Committee could indicate its source for that statistic, and it would provide a government estimate in due course.

46. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that the Government had taken vigorous action in recent years to promote the interests of minority groups. The fourteenth legislature of the National Assembly had adopted development policies on behalf of ethnic minority groups, and the Government had issued a decree on ethnic minority group development programmes for the period from 2014 to 2025 and beyond. Pursuant to a Prime Ministerial decision, a total of 25 local development programmes had been adopted. They were designed to improve the legal framework and institutions for human capital development, access to education and health care, development of culture, tourism, science and technology and digital transformation. The programmes would unleash the potential of ethnic minorities, promote their rights and interests and preserve the environment in a context of sustainable development. They would also help to bridge the development gap between regions and among ethnic minority groups and to mobilize financial resources for economic growth. Training courses had been conducted for civil servants belonging to ethnic minority groups, and steps had been taken to enhance the security of groups living in border areas.

47. **Ms. Ali Al-Misnad** said that she wished to know whether the psychological, social and cultural impact of children's attendance at boarding schools on the children, their parents and local communities had been assessed. She also wished to hear about the impact of training courses for police officers and teachers on respect for human rights and efforts to counter racial discrimination. The Committee would like to know how many religious organizations had applied for registration and what proportion of the applications had been accepted. Religious groups were occasionally required to register religious practices and events, and failure to do so could lead to problems. For example, three Montagnard Protestants had reportedly been detained after they had tried on 22 August 2021 to celebrate the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief.

48. She had also been informed that a group of Vietnamese religious refugees in Thailand had recently been arrested for preparing a document on human rights for submission to the

United Nations. The Committee would like to hear the delegation's views about their situation.

49. **Ms. Chung** said that the Committee would like to know whether the Government had conducted any campaigns to promote tolerance of the Montagnards and whether it had implemented programmes to raise public awareness of discrimination against other ethnic minority groups, such as the Khmer Krom.

50. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that the registration of religious organizations was required in order to prevent the intrusion of religions that violated Vietnamese law. The Law on Belief and Religion had entered into force in 2018. A total of 11 applications for registration had been received, and 6 had been approved. The others had failed to comply with Vietnamese law or customs. All future applications would be handled in accordance with the Law on Belief and Religion.

51. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that boarding schools had been established in the 1950s to provide high-level training for ethnic minorities. The former Chair of the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs had graduated from a boarding school. Graduates from boarding schools accounted for 18 per cent of ethnic minority students. The Government accorded high priority to such schools, and the teaching staff and materials were of high quality. The students could return home if they so wished, but if they wanted to pursue high quality education they needed to remain enrolled in the schools. The operation of the boarding schools was subject to strict regulations. They were required to provide the best possible conditions for students. She had personally spent a lengthy period as head of a boarding school and she was currently working at the Ministry responsible for monitoring boarding school policies.

52. **Ms. McDougall** said that she wished to know why students of ethnic minorities were sent to segregated rather than regular schools. She asked whether the curriculum at boarding schools was the same as elsewhere.

53. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that the curriculum was the same. The Government invested in the boarding schools and provided support for school and accommodation fees. Students were also required to consent to their enrolment.

54. **Mr. Payandeh** said that, according to the State party, people were not prosecuted for practising their religion, but they were prosecuted for breaches of criminal law. A number of special procedure mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council had issued a communication (AL VNM 2/2022) in September 2022 concerning alleged harassment and intimidation of members of the Montagnard community, particularly for making claims against the Government. The Government had denied all the allegations. In its response to the communication, it had stated that the persons in question had been prosecuted for committing crimes, such as disseminating unfounded information abroad regarding alleged human rights violations and religious prosecution in Viet Nam. He requested clarification as to why the State party deemed it necessary to criminalize activities aimed at bringing human rights issues to the attention of international actors, regardless of whether the accuracy of the allegations could be proven.

55. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that, following the terrorist attack in Dak Lak Province on 11 June 2023, all religious groups had been permitted to continue their activities without any obstruction. He therefore reaffirmed that nobody was prosecuted on religious grounds.

56. **Ms. Ali Al-Misnad** said that a document (AL VNM 4/2022) issued by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief on 6 September 2022 listed many individuals who had been arrested or detained, reportedly for their exercise of freedom of religion. Vigorous action had been taken to change the situation through diverse action plans, but very little progress had been achieved on the ground. There was still a great disparity between the situation of the population in general and that of minority groups.

57. **Ms. Chung**, noting that the delegation claimed that there were no scam compounds in Viet Nam, said that she would welcome a more detailed response in writing. She would also welcome more detailed statistics on the numbers of migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons in the country.

58. **Ms. McDougall** said that she would like to know how many Africans or persons of African descent were studying in Vietnamese universities.

59. **Ms. Tebie** said that she wished to know whether foreign children of unknown parents could acquire Vietnamese citizenship.

60. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that it was difficult for the police to investigate cases involving the trafficking of Vietnamese nationals to work in scam compounds in Cambodia. The Vietnamese police were cooperating with the Cambodian police and investigators in order to obtain statistics and to address the issue of human trafficking. She assured the Committee that it would be informed about the outcome of such collaboration.

61. **A representative of Viet Nam** said that his country strongly supported the resolutions on persons of African descent adopted by the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly and the action taken by relevant working groups. The French colonial authorities had not transferred Africans to Viet Nam. He would provide statistics in due course on the number of Africans or persons of African descent who were studying at Vietnamese universities.

62. **Ms. Ali Al-Misnad** said that the achievement of national security and unity required guarantees of the protection and promotion of human rights on behalf of all people in the country. It was essential to promote the freedom of all members of minority groups.

63. **Mr. Y Thong** (Viet Nam) said that the interactive dialogue had provided an opportunity for Viet Nam to receive expert advice on how to guarantee the rights of ethnic minorities and foreigners. He assured the Committee that additional written replies would be provided to unanswered questions. As the elimination of racial discrimination was a challenging task for the entire international community, Viet Nam would continue to work wholeheartedly to implement the Convention and to improve the daily lives of ethnic minorities and foreign nationals living and working in the country.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.