



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

Distr.: General  
24 April 2024

Original: English

---

## Committee against Torture Seventy-ninth session

### Summary record of the 2076th meeting\*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 17 April 2024, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Heller

## Contents

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

*Third periodic report of Honduras*

---

\* No summary record was issued for the 2075th meeting.

---

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.



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

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

*Third periodic report of Honduras (CAT/C/HND/3; CAT/C/HND/QPR/3)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Honduras joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Honduras** said that it was an honour to present her country's third periodic report (CAT/C/HND/3), which had been submitted in 2020, and to report on the main measures taken to promote human rights in the past two years under the Government headed by the first woman President of Honduras, Xiomara Castro. The Government of Honduras was committed to upholding human rights, as was illustrated by the fact that, at that very moment, it was hosting an in situ visit by the Subcommittee against Torture, and was striving to overcome the setbacks experienced by its human rights institutions owing to the lingering social and political impact of the 2009 coup d'état as well as the economic and human consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and Hurricanes Eta and Iota. To improve conditions for the people of Honduras and reduce inequalities, the Government had recently established a number of new ministries and public bodies, including the Ministry for Social Development, the Ministry for Women's Affairs, the Ministry for Transparency and the Fight against Corruption, the Ministry for the Arts and Cultural Heritage of the Honduran Peoples, the National Coordinating Body for the Indigenous Peoples and People of African Descent of Honduras and the Ministry for Children, Adolescents and Families.
3. A number of legislative measures had been introduced in recent years. The Organic Act on Employment and Economic Development Areas had been repealed, as had the State Secrets Act as part of the effort to fight corruption. The definition of the offence of torture set forth in the Criminal Code was currently being revised to align it more closely with international standards. Recently adopted legislation included the Act for the Prevention of Internal Displacement and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, the Act for the Rebuilding of the Constitutional State of Rights and for Non-Repetition, the Shelters Act and the National DNA Database System Act. The Government had taken steps towards ratification of the Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture and had included a line item on gender issues in the State budget for the 2024 financial year. A bill on the search for missing persons and on legal protection for them and their families was currently being examined by the National Congress, as was a bill on compliance with international human rights obligations concerning victims of serious violations committed under the so-called national security doctrine of 1980–1993. A bill to reform the Ministry of Security and the National Police Act, the Police Service Act and the National Preventive Mechanism Act was due to be adopted that week, and a bill on an alert system to trigger searches for missing women would soon be submitted to the National Congress.
4. In 2023, in response to violent clashes at a number of prisons, the Government had issued Executive Decree No. 28, whereby it had instructed the Public Order Military Police to take control of the prison system as an emergency measure. Investigations to determine the parties responsible for the violence were under way; however, its root causes were the institutional weakness of the National Prison Institute and a lack of capacity to tackle organized crime in the region and address the needs existing in the prison system. Prison officers were receiving training in the scope of the country's demilitarization efforts, and a prisoner rehabilitation and reintegration programme was being carried out. A commercial brand name for products manufactured in prisons had been launched to help prisoners to sell goods that they had made. The National Prison Institute budget had been increased by over 125 per cent with a view to improving health and education services, the nutritional status of prisoners and infrastructure in prisons and to reduce overcrowding. Training and capacity-building activities for civilian, military and police officers working in the security, prison and defence sectors had seen a fourfold increase, and 14,279 officials, including police and military personnel, had received human rights training in the three years up to March 2024.
5. The Public Order Military Police, the National Prison Institute and the National Coordinating Body of Enforcement Judges had examined 4,032 files of persons deprived of

liberty as part of the effort to reduce prison overcrowding. The judiciary had drawn up guidelines to aid judges in resolving land disputes involving campesino groups and was working to establish a judicial observatory that could issue recommendations for improving the justice system on the basis of an intersectional and gender-sensitive approach. A new Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General had recently been elected, in compliance with recommendations issued by various international organizations. A regional office of the Missing Persons Monitoring and Reporting Unit had opened in San Pedro Sula, and the comprehensive criminal investigation manual had been updated.

6. A case management model for children, adolescents and young people in conflict with the law had been developed in accordance with international standards. In 2021, a service model and a comprehensive education programme had been designed for all children accommodated at educational detention centres. Guidelines had been developed and updated in 2022 and 2023 to strengthen specialist health care for young people, and a comprehensive clinical guidance handbook was in use at educational detention centres. Twenty specialization courses had been carried out in 2022 to enable professionals working with young people to provide specialist care. In 2023, 30 training courses on a range of relevant topics had also been carried out.

7. The National Congress had recently passed a law establishing an amnesty for migrants who were in an irregular situation and waiving administrative penalties for irregular entry into Honduras. A migrant support centre had been established in the city of Danlí to serve migrants in transit. The Directorate for the Protection of Persons Internally Displaced by Violence had assisted 331 people in 2022, 352 in 2023 and 57 in the first four months of 2024.

8. To support victims of serious human rights violations, the Government had designated 24 March as the National Day for the Right to Truth and Justice; developed the Social Programme for the Families of the Martyrs of the Honduran Resistance and the Programme for Memory, Truth, Reparation, Justice and Non-Repetition for the Reconciliation and Revival of Honduras; and established the Memory and Reconciliation Museum and the National Centre for Historical Memory. In 2022, the President had signed an agreement with two Honduran non-governmental organizations – the Coordinating Body for the People’s Organizations of Aguán and the Agrarian Platform – with a view to investigating human rights violations and land tenure disputes. In 2023, the Agrarian Security and Land Access Commission had been established and, in 2024, the staff of the Directorate General of the Protection System had been expanded from 13 to 22 in order to reduce the backlog in the work of relevant technical committees.

9. The Government was taking steps to improve the country’s economic situation in order to generate sufficient resources to support the implementation of policies and measures benefiting Hondurans. Despite persistent challenges, significant progress had been made in preventing torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment thanks to the Government’s strong commitment to promoting and safeguarding human rights and strengthening the rule of law.

10. **The Chair**, speaking as a Country Rapporteur, said that the Committee wished to acknowledge the legislative and institutional measures taken by the State party in recent years, in particular the creation of several new ministries. It was appreciative of the State party’s efforts to address the multiple human rights challenges faced by Honduras, many of which were long-standing issues, as well as its openness to scrutiny by international bodies. While the recommendations issued by the Committee following its consideration of the previous periodic report had been partially implemented, a number of concerns remained, however.

11. According to reports received by the Committee, the codification of the offence of torture in the Criminal Code in its current form was not fully compliant with the Convention; for instance, the Code failed to take into account that acts of torture could be perpetrated by private individuals and could be committed by way of omission as well as action. The delegation might wish to provide further comments in that regard. In addition, he would appreciate an explanation as to why the offence of torture had not been included in the Military Code. An update on the current status of the bill on the prevention, investigation,

punishment and eradication of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, which had been drafted in March 2023, would also be welcome.

12. The Committee had received reports from alternative sources that fundamental legal safeguards were not routinely respected during the initial stages of detention. Furthermore, it appeared that there was no way of determining the true number of cases of torture because there was no national register of torture cases. Between 2017 and 2023, 99 cases had been reported to the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights but only 10 judgments had been handed down in relation to acts of torture. Moreover, since many victims of torture belonged to marginalized groups, lacked trust in the authorities and feared reprisals, many cases of torture went unreported. Nonetheless, it had been determined that the main perpetrators of torture were police officers and military and security personnel belonging to special units. It had also been reported that medical professionals working at detention facilities often failed to implement the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol). He would be grateful to receive further information from the delegation on those issues.

13. The Committee had been concerned to hear that, according to a press release issued in March 2024 by the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights, detainees at several prisons in Honduras had been subjected to acts of torture including electric shocks, burns and removal of their fingernails. Although the Office was authorized by law to visit prisons, it had had difficulty in doing so since control of the prison system had been transferred to the Public Order Military Police. A response to the Committee's concerns in that regard would be appreciated.

14. It was the Committee's understanding that the State party had strengthened the public defence service thanks to support from international agencies and that public defenders had been posted to a number of police stations in order to ensure that detainees' fundamental rights were upheld. The National Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment also played a key role by conducting visits to police stations. It had been reported that the National Committee continued to encounter difficulties in fulfilling its mandate, however, and, in view of the budgetary constraints it faced, had been advised by the Ministry of Finance to seek financial support from international bodies and friendly Governments. That constituted a failure by the State party to fulfil its obligation under article 18.3 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention to make available the necessary resources for the functioning of national preventive mechanisms. It was his understanding that the National Committee's membership was supposed to include one representative of civil society, one representative of the executive branch and one representative of the legislative branch, yet, apparently because of the lack of regulations governing the election procedure, the elected civil society representative had not been sworn in. The delegation's comments on that situation and on the recent resignation of the representative of the executive branch would be welcome.

15. He would appreciate an explanation of the role of the Human Rights Observatory and would like to know whether it duplicated or complemented the work of the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights. It would be helpful to learn whether the early warning system of the Ministry of Human Rights, which served as a mechanism for preventing and resolving conflict, had helped reduce human rights violations.

16. Judicial independence remained a key concern and had been negatively impacted by the coup d'état of 2009. The Committee was concerned that gaps in the regulations governing the selection and promotion of members of the judiciary made it vulnerable to interference from the legislative and executive branches. The Committee welcomed the recent confirmation of the appointment of a new Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General, in particular since the election of the previous Attorney General had been highly problematic. Nonetheless, it remained concerned that the participation of the Attorney General and the President of the Supreme Court in the National Council for Defence and Security, a body headed by the President of the Republic, could undermine the independence of the judicial branch.

17. It appeared that most members of the defence and security forces who committed human rights violations were not held to account for their actions, as demonstrated by the fact that a number of the agents responsible for the deaths of Keyla Martínez in 2021 and Marcos Pineda in 2022 had had their sentences reduced or been acquitted by the courts. The Committee would appreciate the delegation's comments on that issue and on the specific cases mentioned. A further matter of concern was the lack of progress in the investigation of certain human rights violations committed in the 1980s and during the 2009 coup d'état and the 2017 post-electoral crisis and the fact that the perpetrators remained unpunished. Accordingly, he would welcome an update on the status of the bill concerning the victims of human rights violations committed during the implementation of the so-called national security doctrine from 1980 to 1993. It would be helpful to hear the delegation's remarks on reports that the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights had limited powers and lacked specialized human rights protocols and human and financial resources.

18. The State party was at once a country of origin and transit for undocumented migrants, and it was understandable that the authorities faced challenges in dealing with the large number of individuals who passed through Honduran territory. As violence and insecurity were among the main drivers of migration from the State party and the cause of the internal displacement of large numbers of Hondurans, an update would be appreciated on the steps being taken to address that situation and to implement the law promulgated in March 2023 on the prevention of internal displacement and support and protection for internally displaced persons. He also wished to know what policies were being considered to address the impact of the mass return of migrants to the State party.

19. The Committee was concerned by the successive extensions of the state of emergency since December 2023 and wished to learn about the reasons for those extensions. It was the Committee's view that the repeated extension of the state of emergency raised questions about the role of the Public Order Military Police in ensuring public security, and he invited the delegation to comment on reports received by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that members of the Public Order Military Police and of the special police unit for combating gang activity had committed such human rights violations as enforced disappearance, extrajudicial executions, acts of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and sexual violence.

20. In view of the fact that human rights defenders, Indigenous communities, women, children and young people, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, campesinos in the Bajo Aguán region, journalists, media personnel and justice system officials were all frequently victims of violent attacks, he wished to know whether the State party had considered adopting a comprehensive, human-rights-based security policy with a focus on preventing violence and insecurity and delving into and addressing the structural causes of those phenomena.

21. In view of the fact that the State party's prison system was marred by violence, overcrowding, corruption, inadequate infrastructure and the infiltration of organized crime into the prisons and into inmates' systems of self-government, the Committee had been concerned to learn that the State party planned to build a new maximum-security prison on the Swan Islands, particularly since the remote location of those islands meant that inmates would likely be unable to receive visits from their families or lawyers. He would like to know whether the State party was pursuing that plan and, if so, whether the plan's impact had been assessed and what the implications would be for inmates' rehabilitation and reintegration.

22. Information on the status of the bill on comprehensive reparation for victims of human rights violations caused by actions or omissions attributable to the State would be welcome. He would also appreciate an update on the status of the legal proceedings against the individual accused of instigating the murder of the activist Berta Cáceres and his current legal situation.

23. Given the need for the State party to improve the compilation of disaggregated data on attacks against human rights defenders, the alarmingly high number of such attacks and the controversy surrounding the Honduran National Protection System, the Committee would endeavour to formulate recommendations for strengthening the State party's ability to protect human rights defenders, journalists, social communicators and justice officials. Other areas

of concern included the high incidence of violence against Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Hondurans and the criminalization of human rights defenders such as David Romero Ellner, Santos Hernández, Abel Pérez and Nolvía Obando. He wished to know what specific policies were in place to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and whether any measures had been adopted in response to the 2021 judgment of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of *Vicky Hernández et al. v. Honduras*. Bearing in mind that the State maintained that it had not considered making the declarations provided for under articles 21 and 22 of the Convention because alleged victims could lodge complaints before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, it would be interesting to know how many complaints of a violation by the State party had been lodged before the Inter-American Commission and how many related cases were currently being considered by the Inter-American Court.

24. While the current Government could not be expected to overcome long-standing challenges inherited from the past overnight, it could, with sufficient political will, build the foundations of a comprehensive policy to reduce impunity, promote victims' access to justice and strengthen its institutions and the rule of law.

25. **Ms. Maeda** (Country Rapporteur) said that she would appreciate up-to-date information on the steps taken by the State party to bring its domestic anti-trafficking legislation into line with international standards and would like to know whether the 2016–2022 Strategic Plan to Combat Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons had been renewed. She also wondered why, according to the statistics provided in paragraph 57 of the State party's report, there had been more prosecutions for, than complaints of, commercial sexual exploitation in the period 2016–2020 and why the conviction rate for both trafficking in persons and commercial sexual exploitation had been so low during the period under review.

26. She would be interested to know how many cases of violence against women had been prosecuted under article 209 of the Criminal Code, how many cases of gender-based violence had been investigated and prosecuted during the reporting period and how many convictions had been handed down as a result. It would be helpful to learn whether any measures had been taken to amend the Criminal Code to ensure that the penalty for femicide was commensurate with the gravity of the offence and whether any steps had been taken to ensure that cases of femicide were investigated by the Inter-Agency Commission for Monitoring the Investigation of Violent Deaths of Women and Femicides and that perpetrators were prosecuted and suitably punished. A description would be appreciated of the strategies in place for ensuring that cases of sexual abuse or harassment were effectively investigated, that perpetrators were prosecuted and that victims could file a complaint without the consent of a parent or legal guardian.

27. She would be grateful for updated information on the status of the public debate on domestic legislation governing the voluntary termination of pregnancy, on any judicial developments in that regard and on any appeals of unconstitutionality filed with the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice in relation to the absolute prohibition of abortion. If any such appeals had indeed been filed, information about the Court's rulings on those appeals would be very useful. It would also be helpful to learn how many women had been prosecuted under article 196 of the Criminal Code for having had an abortion and how many had been prosecuted under article 194, on the offence of parricide, for having done so. She wished to know whether it was true that the offence of parricide was applied to cases of abortion because it carried a heavier penalty. She would also appreciate learning the reasons why limitations had reportedly been placed on access to the emergency contraceptive pill and on the scope of health insurance coverage in that regard.

28. She wished to know whether all relevant stakeholders, including forensic scientists, received appropriate training on the application of the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the Istanbul Protocol) and what was done to ensure the independence and impartiality of expert institutions such as the Forensic Medicine Directorate.

29. She invited the delegation to respond to reports that, in many cases, public officials under investigation for acts of torture were not reassigned to alternative duties or prevented

from influencing the investigation or confronting their alleged victims. Comments would also be appreciated on reports that public prosecutors and judges often classified conduct amounting to torture as a less serious offence and that judges systematically failed to order the Public Prosecution Service to initiate investigations into complaints of torture. She would welcome up-to-date information on the human and financial resources available to the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights and on the number of cases investigated and prosecuted by the Office.

30. She would be interested in an update on the status of the bill on comprehensive reparation for victims of human rights violations, including acts of torture, which was mentioned in paragraph 189 of the State party's report, together with information on the number of cases in which victims had been granted reparation.

31. It would be useful to receive information on the steps taken to address the needs of minors in detention in compliance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules) and on whether there were plans to introduce alternatives to juvenile detention in accordance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules). She wished to know whether consideration had been given to raising the age of criminal responsibility to an internationally acceptable level, for example of at least 14 years. Statistics on the number of cases of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment involving child victims that had been reported to the relevant authorities would be of interest, as would information on the number of perpetrators prosecuted for such crimes and on the sentences handed down in those cases.

32. Lastly, she wondered whether measures were being taken to establish an independent mechanism to monitor residential centres for persons with disabilities and whether sufficient human and financial resources were provided to prevent torture in such centres. She was also interested in learning what was being done to ensure that no women or girls with disabilities were subjected to forced sterilization or abortion and, more generally, that all medical procedures and treatments concerning persons with disabilities were carried out only with their free and informed consent.

33. **Mr. Contesse** said that it would be interesting to learn about the Government's stance on the issue of abortion, bearing in mind its stated ambition to take into account a gender perspective and intersectional approach in judicial matters, and how it viewed the 2021 constitutional reform that had further cemented the prohibition of abortion. He wished to invite the delegation to comment on the legal rationale for applying the offence of parricide, a form of murder, to cases of abortion, how relevant State bodies and officials viewed that practice and how many times it had occurred.

34. **Ms. Racu** said that she would appreciate detailed information, including statistics, on the treatment of persons in psychosocial and psychiatric institutions, the material conditions in such centres, the use of restraints, the existence of complaints mechanisms in such facilities and any independent monitoring mechanisms that were in place.

*The meeting was suspended at noon and resumed at 12.15 p.m.*

35. **A representative of Honduras** said that a congressional committee was working in cooperation with human rights organizations to review the Criminal Code in order to identify any provisions that were not compatible with international standards. As part of its work, the committee was exploring ways to adapt and strengthen the definition of torture currently contained in the Code. A working group on legislative harmonization had also been formed that was chaired by the Ministry of Human Rights and whose members included representatives of civil society organizations.

36. The previous day, the National Congress had debated a draft decree containing a number of legislative amendments that were relevant to the implementation of the Convention. Under the amendments, police officers would be given the authority to instruct a forensic doctor to undertake a physical and psychological examination of newly detained persons. The proposals also dealt with the development of new training courses on human rights for police officers, the creation of a new national register of detainees and the

establishment of an inter-institutional follow-up mechanism for recommendations related to torture.

37. The National Congress was also considering a draft decree that would amend existing legislation on violence against women to strengthen the applicable penalties. The text of that draft decree had been prepared on the basis of recommendations made by organizations representing women. Unfortunately, the Government did not have the majority in Congress that it needed to pass all the reforms that it would like to introduce concerning women's rights. Honduras remained a highly patriarchal society, and the opposition parties had reacted with hostility to the executive's proposals to increase access to abortion and to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. With regard to the former, it should also be noted that any bill proposing the full legalization of abortion would require a three-quarters majority in Congress.

38. **A representative of Honduras** said that a bill on compliance with international human rights obligations in relation to victims of the so-called national security doctrine had recently been brought before the National Congress. The aim of the bill was to uphold the rights of victims of historical crimes and of Honduran society as a whole to memory, truth, reparation, justice and non-repetition. Although previous Administrations had failed to push through similar legislation, it was hoped that the new bill would be adopted in the near future. Draft legislation on the disappearance of Honduran migrants would also shortly be submitted to the National Congress.

39. Legislation could be passed only if it received sufficient support in Congress, and elected representatives from opposition political parties sometimes blocked bills sponsored by the governing party. However, the Government was committed to doing everything in its power to push through legislation designed to protect the human rights of Honduran citizens.

40. **A representative of Honduras** said that members of the armed forces were not exempt from responsibility for acts of torture, even though the criminal offence of torture had not been explicitly incorporated into the Military Code. Cases concerning members of the armed forces suspected of committing an act of torture not of a military nature were heard by civilian courts, in accordance with articles 90 and 91 of the Constitution. In general, when any complaint concerning a crime not covered in the Military Code was lodged against a member of the armed forces, the officer in question was immediately suspended from his or her duties and bound over for trial by a civilian court.

41. The Detainee Reception Unit of the military police, which had been established in February 2023, recorded information about all detainees and maintained dedicated registers on, among other things, evidence, prison visits, belongings, legal representatives, human rights incidents and medical conditions. Those registers helped to ensure that any human rights violations were immediately identified so that preventive action could be taken. Furthermore, records were kept during the detention process on any seizures and personal searches carried out, any vehicles confiscated and any evidence received or gathered. The number of members of the armed forces who had participated in training activities on human rights, international humanitarian law, the use of force and gender equality had increased from roughly 9,500 in 2021 to 49,502 in 2023. Human rights and gender equality units had also been created in each of the four main branches of the armed forces, and a special project had been put in place under which military personnel received practical human rights training based on real-life scenarios.

42. Feasibility studies were still being carried out to assess the possibility of constructing a prison on one of the Swan Islands. Each of the studies took into consideration the need to ensure compliance with all international standards concerning the protection of the human rights of persons deprived of their liberty.

43. **A representative of Honduras** said that the appointment procedure for Supreme Court justices had been modified pursuant to amendments to the Organic Act on the Nominations Committee for the Election of Supreme Court Judges. Under the amendments, new rules had been introduced on the participation of civil society, the conduct of candidates and the use of a written exam as part of the selection process. In general, the entire appointment process had been made more open, public and transparent. Candidates applied in a personal capacity and were not sponsored by third parties. There was greater respect for



gender equality, and 8 of the 15 current members of the Supreme Court were women. Now that the new Supreme Court had been appointed, the Government was committed to taking prompt action to draft new legislation on internal appointments, promotions and personnel management in the judiciary to replace the Act on the Council of the Judiciary and the Judicial Service, which had been declared unconstitutional several years previously.

44. Honduran judges were constitutionally obligated to observe international norms. The standards set out in the international treaties signed by Honduras automatically became part of the nation's laws and must therefore be taken into account by judges, regardless of whether their provisions had been explicitly incorporated into domestic legislation.

45. The Criminal Code established a clear distinction between the offences of illegal abortion and parricide, and there had been no cases of women being charged with parricide for having undergone an abortion. Two convictions had been obtained in relation to the death of Berta Cáceres but both had been appealed before the criminal chamber of the Supreme Court. Preliminary decisions had already been reached, and verdicts in both cases would shortly be delivered and made public. The judiciary had initiated an investigation in order to establish whether there had been any shortcomings or flaws in the court proceedings that had resulted in the reclassification of the case of Keyla Martínez from aggravated femicide to involuntary manslaughter. An awareness-raising campaign had also been launched to ensure that judicial officials throughout the country understood how to apply a gender perspective in their analysis of cases of violence against women and other complex cases concerning women, as required under the Code of Criminal Procedure.

46. With the aim of reducing prison overcrowding, the judiciary was working with relevant government departments and local prison authorities around the country to identify persons deprived of their liberty who had already completed the permitted duration of pretrial detention, who were eligible for release on parole, who had terminal illnesses or who qualified for alternative forms of sentence completion. Judges were being instructed to avoid ordering pretrial detention where possible and to use alternative measures that safeguarded due process guarantees and the liberty of accused persons.

47. **A representative of Honduras** said that, pursuant to the reform of the Organic Act on the Nominations Committee for the Election of Supreme Court Judges, candidates who had previous convictions for acts of violence against women or for failing to pay alimony for their children were disqualified. The principles of inclusion and equality embedded in the new selection procedure had resulted not only in the appointment of eight female judges but also in the appointment of the first member of the Garifuna community to become a Supreme Court justice. All the deliberations of the Nominations Committee and the National Congress over the appointments had been broadcast live on television. The new Supreme Court had since formed working groups with the legislature to address the issues of legislative harmonization and women's access to justice.

48. **A representative of Honduras** said that the person who had been the Attorney General when the current Administration had taken office had not been elected under the appointment process set out by law. Furthermore, when his term had come to an end, the opposition parties had prevented the Government from appointing a replacement. As provided for by the Constitution, a new Attorney General had been appointed on an interim basis by an ad hoc committee formed when the National Congress had gone into recess. Although that appointment had been criticized, those measures had been taken simply to ensure that the position of Attorney General was not left vacant and that the justice system could continue to function normally. The Government had subsequently secured the support of the opposition parties for the appointment of the Attorney General and had agreed to select a Deputy Attorney General to serve under him.

49. **A representative of Honduras** said that the National Prison Institute participated in an inter-institutional working group that was reviewing the files of inmates with a view to reducing prison populations. As a result of the group's work over the previous eight months, 1,444 prisoners had been released on parole, 631 had been granted early release, 120 had been granted exceptional release on parole and 139 had been granted unconditional release. Seven prisoners had also been released because they were suffering from a terminal illness. The efficiency of the criminal justice system had also been improved thanks to the

establishment of 12 virtual chambers in courts throughout the country. To date, 635 virtual hearings had been held.

50. In the context of measures taken to eliminate situations of inmate self-rule, the Intervention Commission had been provided with training in prison management and in the application of international standards of detention in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross. New facilities capable of accommodating over 2,000 inmates, the majority in conditions of maximum security, were being built at three prisons. The military police had carried out interventions at prisons throughout the country during which nobody had been injured, despite the large number of weapons and other items of a military nature that had been found in the possession of inmates. As a result of those operations, the authorities had been able to identify and isolate the members of two criminal organizations operating at the prisons in Moroceli and Ilama. All restaurants and other personal businesses run by prisoners, which had led to problems of extortion, had been eliminated, and inmates could no longer carry cash but instead could buy small consumables from official stores using prepaid cards. A rapid response unit composed of 45 prison officers trained in human rights and the proportional use of force had also been formed.

51. A number of measures had been taken to improve conditions at the National Women's Prison for Social Adaptation, including the replacement of the roof, the installation of insulation, the expansion of the nursery area where mothers were held with their small children, the improvement of sanitary facilities and the installation of fans, television sets and telephone booths. The sleeping quarters used by the prison staff had also been refurbished.

52. Significant steps had been taken to improve prisoners' access to health care. Clinics at all prisons had been provided with new equipment and medical supplies, three ambulances had been repaired, and eight doctors, three psychologists and two nutritionists had been hired. A campaign aimed at preventing the spread of dengue fever among prisoners had been launched, and a member of the National Congress had put forward a draft decree for the construction of a prison hospital. The International Committee of the Red Cross had organized 303 training activities on health care in prisons, and over 200,000 health-care services had been provided to prisoners in 2023 alone.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*