



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

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Committee against Torture Seventy-ninth session

Summary record of the 2095th meeting*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 1 May 2024, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Mr. Heller

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* No summary records were issued for the 2092nd to 2094th meetings.

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

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

Fourth periodic report of North Macedonia (CAT/C/MKD/4; CAT/C/MKD/QPR/4)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of North Macedonia joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of North Macedonia**, introducing his country's fourth periodic report (CAT/C/MKD/4), said that his Government had worked diligently to uphold and protect human rights and maintained a zero-tolerance policy regarding acts of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment.
3. The implementation of the Committee's recommendations was an integral part of the country's ongoing efforts to reform the prison and judicial system. Having finalized the 2017–2022 reform strategy, in December 2023 the Government had adopted the new Judicial Sector Development Strategy for 2024–2028, which set out a road map for restoring citizens' trust in the judiciary.
4. The continuing education programme for judges and public prosecutors covered topics related to the commission of criminal acts of torture and ill-treatment by police officers or prison personnel, with a special focus on judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. The Criminal Code had been amended in 2023 in line with the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), and the Ministry of Health was working with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund to establish three referral centres for victims of sexual violence in accordance with that Convention.
5. The first conviction for hate speech based on sexual orientation had been handed down in March 2024, a law providing for compensation for victims of violent crimes had been passed in November 2022 and a law on justice for children had been adopted that transposed European Union directives on procedural safeguards for children in conflict with the law.
6. The selection of the three non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that would participate in the Civil Oversight Mechanism had been finalized. The Mechanism, which would operate within the framework of the Office of the Ombudsman, would help to uphold the prohibition of torture within the criminal investigation system.
7. Fighting organized crime and stamping out corruption remained a priority. The State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption proactively addressed cronyism and improper political influence in the recruitment of public sector personnel, and a law on the prevention of corruption and conflicts of interest had been adopted in 2019. The Corruption Risk Assessment Tool and internal public procurement and whistle-blower procedures had been introduced since 2022. An annual report on the implementation of the plan for preventing corruption in the prison system had been prepared. In accordance with recommendations made by the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), integrity tests had been introduced for prospective and current employees of the Ministry of the Interior, along with a workplace integrity action plan and policy.
8. Amendments to the Criminal Code, including its provisions on the offence of torture, were nearing completion. They incorporated all relevant international standards and addressed the flaws that had been identified. There were offences covered in the article of the Criminal Code on torture that were not subject to a statute of limitations, and the penalties for that offence had been increased. Two prison police officers had been prosecuted in 2023 for the offence of ill-treatment, and final court decisions in those cases had been issued.
9. Improving prison conditions was one of the Government's top priorities, and the Directorate for the Execution of Sanctions was working towards that goal in close coordination with the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) and the Council of Europe. Amendments to the Law on the Execution of Sanctions had been adopted in March 2024 that were designed to improve the management of the prison system. They provided for the establishment of prison intelligence units and intervention teams and for the use of body cameras. Steps had also

been taken to address the crisis caused by prison staff shortages. The National Strategy for the Development of the Penitentiary System for the period 2021–2025 had been adopted, and a suicide prevention strategy had been developed. All operating procedures for the prison police force had been revised, and a standard operating procedure for health care in prisons had been drawn up. An agreement had been reached to provide a 30 per cent increase in the salaries of prison health-care personnel, and approximately €50,000 in medical equipment for use in prisons had been procured. The second phase of the prison reconstruction project, which was detailed in the report, was now under way. The project was to be completed by the end of 2027.

10. In 2019–2024, 134 training courses had been provided to a total of 1,776 prison system employees. In 2023 and 2024, training dealing with torture and inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment had been conducted by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights. In addition, a prison staff training strategy for 2023–2026 that incorporated international standards had been adopted in early 2024. The Directorate had an action plan for the implementation of recommendations relating to the prison system. A specific plan for addressing the situation in the Idrizovo Correctional Facility was also in place.

11. Efforts to promote alternatives to detention had included the expansion of the probation service. In November 2017, the first probation office had opened and had handled 2 cases; as of 2024, there were 11 probation offices handling 600 active cases. The 2021–2025 strategy for the development of the service was in place, as were various training activities.

12. In 2023 the Ombudsman had issued a positive report on the treatment of persons housed in the Reception Centre for Foreigners. The implementation of the national strategy and action plan for combating human trafficking and illegal migration was ongoing.

13. The National Deinstitutionalization Strategy 2018–2027 and the National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2023–2030 were aimed at promoting the rights, dignity and quality of life of persons with disabilities.

14. Finally, he wished to emphasize that the Republic of North Macedonia remained committed to achieving the highest standards in its protection and promotion of human rights.

15. **Ms. Racu** (Country Rapporteur), noting the substantial progress made by the State party during the reporting period and explaining that her questions would chiefly be related to the State party's obligations under articles 1 through 9 of the Convention, said that she wished to know whether attempted torture and complicity or participation in an act of torture were explicitly defined as offences in the Criminal Code in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention. She would also like to know whether the principle of command responsibility for offences of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, whereby a superior could be held criminally liable for an act of torture committed by a subordinate, had been incorporated into the Criminal Code and, if so, under which article.

16. She wished to invite the delegation to comment on reports indicating that the State party had not yet created the legislative or financial frameworks needed to ensure the genuine independence of the Office of the Ombudsman. In that regard, the Committee would be interested to learn when the State party expected the passage of the bill amending and supplementing the Law on the Ombudsman. Information on efforts to secure category A status accreditation for the national human rights institution would also be appreciated. Did the national preventive mechanism have sufficient funding to recruit experts in all the areas that it should be monitoring? How many recommendations and how many special reports of the type mentioned in subparagraph 110 (f) of the report had the mechanism mentioned in that subparagraph issued in recent years?

17. She had noted the progress made by the State party in putting in place numerous fundamental legal safeguards for detainees, but some of them were reportedly not implemented in all cases. What steps had been taken to ensure that police officers complied with the relevant legislation and standard operating procedures at all times? Detailed information on the performance of medical examinations upon detainees' arrival in police detention units and the documentation and reporting of injuries and health conditions would be most welcome. She was especially interested in learning whether police officers were

present during such examinations, whether detailed records of injuries were kept and whether CCTV and audio and video recordings were used. She would be interested to learn how many cases of injuries had been reported in the last four years.

18. Details and statistics on investigations into incidents involving the excessive use of force by the police on detainees or peaceful protesters and on related prosecutions, convictions and criminal or disciplinary sanctions in the last four years would be appreciated. The Committee would welcome updated information on the work of the Civil Oversight Mechanism and on the activities and scope of authority of the department in the prosecution service that handled crimes committed by police officers or prison police officers. She wondered whether there was any overlap of responsibilities between the two oversight bodies.

19. She would be interested to hear the delegation's response to allegations that prison officers sometimes used physical abuse as a disciplinary measure, that abuse was often unreported or inadequately addressed and that low staffing levels were a contributing factor to violence in prisons. She would like to hear about the specific measures taken to prevent inter-prisoner violence, self-harm and suicides. Information on related investigations, legislation and preventive strategies and on mechanisms for reporting such incidents and protecting vulnerable inmates would be welcome, as would statistics on the number of violent incidents in places of detention and deaths in custody during the last four years. The Committee would like to receive information on the steps taken to ensure the confidentiality of the complaints mechanisms available in places of detention and to inform inmates about it and how to use it.

20. It would be helpful to learn about educational opportunities for juveniles in detention and what arrangements were made for other activities for them and for contact with the outside world. She invited the delegation to comment on reports that a large proportion of juveniles in detention had mental health issues and were sometimes overmedicated. Was a complaints mechanism available for minors? Had minors been transferred to the newly built facility in Tetovo? Statistics on the number of juvenile detainees and information on non-custodial alternative measures for children in conflict with the law and on any current initiatives focusing on such children would be useful.

21. An explanation of the factors underlying the increase in the number of gender-based and domestic violence cases reported between 2013 and early 2019 would be useful. The Committee would like to know what measures were being taken to ensure that victims of such violence could file complaints, that those complaints would be thoroughly investigated and that, where appropriate, perpetrators would be prosecuted and punished. What steps were being taken to address the problem of underreporting? Information on measures to protect Roma women, in particular, would be appreciated. She also wished to know what was being done to address gender inequalities and to ensure that judges and law enforcement personnel strictly applied the laws on violence against women.

22. She would be interested to learn about efforts to upgrade the infrastructure of the country's psychiatric institutions and to recruit and train more staff. Information would also be appreciated on the steps being taken to address other serious shortcomings in such institutions, including a lack of appropriate therapy sessions and meaningful activities for the patients. She would also like to know what procedures were in place to ensure that patients who had entered such institutions voluntarily but who had subsequently been required to remain there against their will benefited from all appropriate legal safeguards. The Committee was particularly interested in learning about the conditions in the psychiatric hospitals in Skopje, Negorci and Demir Hisar. Was the new facility in Demir Kapija fully operational?

23. The Committee had received reports of degrading treatment or punishment of psychiatric patients and the use of restraints in ways that could amount to torture in some institutions. She was therefore keen to know what independent monitoring and complaints mechanisms were in place in those institutions, which bodies conducted inspections in them and how often, what criteria were used to determine whether and for how long mechanical restraints were appropriate, how restrained patients were supervised and if staff received specialized training in the use of restraints.

24. Finally, she would appreciate learning of any requests made since the submission of the report for the extradition of a person to stand trial for the crime of torture and the action taken by the State party in response. In the event that an extradition request was accepted, what measures were in place to ensure that requesting States would not subject extradited persons to torture or ill-treatment?

25. **Mr. Rouwane** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would like to know whether the Government was considering recognizing the Committee's competence to consider individual communications or ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. He would appreciate more detailed information on the participation of civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders in the preparation of the periodic report.

26. In view of concerns about undue external influence over the work of the Judicial Council, he would be interested to hear about the measures it and the Council of Public Prosecutors were envisaging to promote the independence, integrity and professionalism of judges and prosecutors. He wondered whether the Government planned to review the legislative and operational framework for the two bodies to that end. He would like to know about measures taken under the Declaration on Open Judiciary to increase transparency and prevent the exertion of undue influence.

27. The Committee would appreciate an explanation of the delay in implementing the new judicial reform strategy and would be interested to hear about any measures taken to expedite the implementation of human resources strategies for the judiciary and prosecution services, particularly in the light of the impact of scheduled retirements. An update on prosecutions for torture and ill-treatment during the reporting period would be welcome.

28. He invited the delegation to comment on reports that, despite the fact that the principle of non-refoulement was enshrined in national law, asylum claims were poorly adjudicated and that international protection could be denied or withdrawn on grounds of "a threat to national security", without any credible evidence that such a threat existed. How many persons who had been denied asylum or returned on such grounds? Could they challenge such decisions in court and did they have access to free legal aid? He was interested in the delegation's comments on the persons, most of them Roma, from Kosovo who had recently been declared a threat to national security after having been under subsidiary protection since 1999. He would appreciate clarification about the low success rate for asylum applications, delays in family reunification for persons granted subsidiary protection and the introduction of measures limiting the freedom of movement of asylum-seekers.

29. He recalled that the detention of asylum-seekers and refugees, especially children, should be avoided and that, where that was not possible, they should enjoy fundamental legal safeguards, including the right to be informed of their rights, to receive legal and medical assistance, to contact their family and to appeal their detention. Moreover, independent monitoring mechanisms should be authorized to visit migrant detention centres.

30. Regarding reports that the legal status of persons held at the Vinojug and Tabanovce transit centres was uncertain and that migrants, including children, had been violently pushed back at the borders, the State party was invited to clarify the legal status of individuals in transit centres, to describe the measures taken to increase the availability of judicial and other remedies for detainees and persons at risk of torture and ill-treatment and to improve conditions in the country's reception centres. Up-to-date data on the number of children in reception centres and the duration of detention for migrants and asylum-seekers would be welcome, as would information on the progress of efforts to resolve cases of statelessness in the country by the end of 2024.

31. He noted the legislative and policy advances made in addressing human trafficking but was also aware that insufficient funding for mobile teams was having a negative impact on the ability to detect victims of trafficking. There were also reports that difficulties were being encountered in proving the purpose of exploitation in many cases. Against that backdrop, he wished to know the extent to which the Committee's previous recommendations concerning investigations, prosecutions, penalties and compensation in trafficking cases had been implemented. He was also keen to hear about the results of anti-trafficking strategies

and plans and the measures in place for providing victims with effective remedies and support and for protecting vulnerable children from sexual exploitation.

32. With reference to paragraph 18 of the list of issues prior to reporting, it would be helpful to learn about any legislative or institutional developments concerning the implementation of article 14 of the Convention, any cases where the law on the compensation of victims of serious crimes had been applied to victims of torture and any measures to ensure full reparation in line with the Committee's general comment No. 3. How many requests for reparation had been submitted and what had their outcome been? He would like to know if any redress had been provided to Zuher Ibrahimov, who had suffered grave bodily harm at the hands of a prison officer.

33. Although some efforts had been made to improve conditions of detention, much remained to be done, as corroborated by the national preventive mechanism, the European Commission, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and civil society organizations. In some cases, conditions had deteriorated, as, for instance, in terms of the security situation in the closed ward of Idrizovo Prison. Amid a general lack of funding and understaffing in the prison system, overcrowding was severe, particularly in some wards of Idrizovo Prison, while some prisons struggled to provide basic health and sanitation services, adequate food and clean water. Imprisoned minors faced a lack of education and training opportunities, and many were overmedicated. The Committee did, however, welcome the continued expansion of the probation system.

34. In that context, the Committee would appreciate information on the results thus far of the 2021–2025 National Strategy for the Development of the Penitentiary System, particularly with regard to overcrowding and the construction and repair schedule, Ministry of Health plans for ensuring adequate access to health and dental care for detained persons, solutions sought for the water supply problem at Kumanovo Prison, steps taken to improve conditions in solitary confinement and action taken in response to relevant recommendations of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture.

35. He noted reports that Roma persons were subjected to systemic discrimination and racism by the police and at every stage of criminal proceedings and to violence in prison and that they were overrepresented in the criminal justice system. He also noted that three cases involving the death in custody of a Roma individual had been brought against North Macedonia before the European Court of Human Rights. Against that background, he would welcome the State party's comments on the cause of death of Andrias Redjepov and Erdal Jusinov and the outcome of the criminal suits brought against Shtip Prison on behalf of Akcha and Muzafer Jusinova.

36. The Committee commended the State party on its efforts to strengthen human-rights-related training programmes and activities but regretted that they did not cover issues it had raised during its previous dialogue with the State party. Therefore, the Committee would be grateful to receive updated information about training specifically on the provisions of the Convention, any compulsory training for all professionals involved in documenting or investigating acts of torture and ill-treatment on the use of the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol), any evaluation of the effectiveness of training provided to law enforcement personnel regarding the prevention and prosecution of acts of torture and ill-treatment and any relevant programmes or activities run by the Academy for Training of Judges and Public Prosecutors as part of its cooperation with the European Judicial Training Network and the Academy of European Law.

37. It would be interesting to hear what measures were provided for in the national strategies on terrorism and violent extremism and the draft rule book of the National Committee on Violent Extremism and Counter-Terrorism to ensure that the human rights of persons suspected of or charged with committing acts of terrorism were respected. Information on the results of the Joint Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism for the Western Balkans and the impact of the anti-radicalization measures outlined in the 2021–2025 National Strategy for the Development of the Penitentiary System would also be of interest. Lastly, in the light of the State party's commendable approach to the thorny legal and political problem of the return of its nationals from conflict areas, including the Syrian Arab Republic,

he would value up-to-date information on the actions taken to uphold human rights and to prevent stigmatization and exclusion under the National Plan for the Reintegration, Resocialization and Rehabilitation of Returnees from Conflicts Abroad and Members of Their Families.

38. **Mr. Contesse** said that, in relation to the information provided in paragraphs 13 and 15 of the report concerning allegations of excessive use of force by the police during the events of 27 April 2017, he wished to know when the charges had been filed and what the outcome of the criminal proceedings had been. With reference to paragraph 20 of the report on the use of force against inmates, he would be interested in hearing about the outcome of the charges and reports filed with the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office and, where applicable, why that information was unavailable to the Department for Internal Control, Criminal Investigations and Professional Standards.

39. Regarding the Law on Amnesty, he would welcome information on any developments in the cases relating to the 2001 armed conflict, including what was known as the "Neproshteno" case referred to in paragraph 85 of the report. Similarly, it would be helpful to know whether any investigations and prosecutions had been conducted in the case of the kidnapping of the 12 ethnic Macedonians and a Bulgarian national and the case of the enforced disappearance of 6 ethnic Albanians mentioned in paragraph 86 of the report. Had anyone been convicted in that connection?

40. In its previous concluding observations, the Committee had pointed to inconsistencies between the Law on Amnesty and the Convention, while general comment No. 2 warned against the danger of amnesties preventing the prompt and fair prosecution of perpetrators of torture. Moreover, in the case *Marguš v. Croatia*, the European Court of Human Rights had underscored the growing tendency in international law to consider amnesty laws as incompatible with the unanimously recognized obligation of States to prosecute and punish grave breaches of fundamental human rights. Therefore, the Committee wished to know why the State party was not considering amending the Law on Amnesty.

The meeting was suspended at 11.50 a.m. and resumed at 12.20 p.m.

41. **A representative of North Macedonia** said that the amended article 142 of the Criminal Code, on the offence of torture, was applicable to persons who, in performing their duties, committed an act of torture of their own accord or at the instigation of another official, as well as persons who failed to report an act of torture at the instigation of an official. Also punishable under article 142 was the use of force, coercion, threats or any other illicit means to extract information from a person. The minimum penalty for that offence was 5 years' imprisonment. Article 142 (2) of the Criminal Code established harsher penalties for situations where an act of torture had been committed as a hate crime. A provision doing away with any statute of limitations for war crimes had been introduced in article 112 of the Criminal Code. That provision would also apply to a number of other crimes, including torture as defined in article 142.

42. The amended article 143 of the Criminal Code related to offences involving a violation of the victim's dignity. It was applicable to officials acting in the performance of their duties, whether acting ex officio or at the instigation of another official, and it covered the use of force, threats or physical or mental violence with the intention of inflicting mental or emotional harm. Such acts were punishable by 3 to 10 years' imprisonment.

43. The national preventive mechanism was composed of one State counsellor, one counsellor responsible for the prevention of torture and one associate officer. In conducting visits to places of detention, the mechanism drew on the services of external experts in different fields and representatives of academia and civil society, thereby enabling it to take a multidisciplinary approach.

44. Measures were being taken to build the capacities of the Ombudsman's Office. In that connection, the Law on the Ombudsman had been amended in 2016. Further amendments to that law were currently being drafted with a view to strengthening the Office's ability to combat trafficking in persons and ensure implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Other draft amendments were aimed at extending the mandate of

the NGOs that formed part of the Civil Oversight Mechanism in line with the recommendations made in a judgment of the European Court of Human Rights.

45. The special reports prepared by the Ombudsman's Office on different aspects of human rights played a key role in improving the human rights situation in the country. For instance, the Office had issued a report on the situation of non-registered persons in which it had urged the relevant institutions to expedite the measures taken to resolve their situation. The Government had subsequently adopted legislation requiring the institutions concerned to act on the Office's recommendations.

46. A department for investigating criminal offences committed by police and prison police officers had been established under the amended Law on the Public Prosecutor's Office of 2018 and the new Law on the Public Prosecutor's Office adopted in 2020. That department was staffed by three public prosecutors and three special investigators and was now fully functional. It kept two sets of records: records on known offenders and records on persons suspected of having committed an offence. In 2022, the department had registered 36 cases involving allegations of torture or inhuman and degrading treatment and had initiated investigations into 48 persons, 42 of whom had subsequently been convicted by a court of first instance.

47. The Civil Oversight Mechanism, which worked out of the Ombudsman's Office, had been established in accordance with the amended Law on the Ombudsman. The Mechanism was composed of one State counsellor and two other counsellors plus the representatives of three NGOs and was tasked with responding to complaints of torture filed by individuals or representatives of civil society. In 2023, the Mechanism had taken action in relation to 19 cases, 13 of which concerned the excessive use of force or acts of ill-treatment committed by police officers while on duty and 6 of which related to acts committed by members of the prison police. Convictions had been secured against a number of the police officers concerned.

48. It was mandatory for a lawyer to be appointed in all legal cases involving children. That right to a defence lawyer had also been established for all persons in the Law on Criminal Procedure. Free legal aid, funded by the State, was allocated to persons who could not afford a lawyer. Legal aid for children had previously been provided by the Ministry of Justice and by lawyers acting on a pro bono basis. However, under the new Children's Justice Law adopted in March 2023, any individual or agency initiating proceedings in cases involving children was required to bear the cost of their legal counsel if the child's parents could not afford it.

49. Between 2019 and 2023, the Ministry of Justice had allocated over €30,000 for the provision of legal assistance for children facing legal proceedings. Directive (EU) 2016/800 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on procedural safeguards for children had been incorporated into national law, thereby establishing children's right to free legal aid.

50. A total of 32 indicators were used to measure the extent to which children's right to justice was being realized and as a basis for developing policies on children's rights. Two of the indicators were used to measure the application of prison sentences to minors. The records showed that a custodial sentence had been given to four children in 2022, two children in 2023 and one child to date in 2024. Pretrial detention had been ordered in the case of 22 children in 2021, 7 children in 2022 and 4 children in 2023. Around 48 per cent of children at risk had benefited from support and protection measures implemented by social work centres.

51. The Children's Justice Law established that at least five days of mandatory training on juvenile justice must be provided to the staff of social work centres, juvenile court judges, public prosecutors and police officers. Training programmes on the subject had been developed and were being run by the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors and the training centre of the Ministry of the Interior.

52. Training on the prevention of torture formed part of the initial and in-service training given to judges and public prosecutors by the Academy. The initial training for prospective judges and public prosecutors lasted for 24 months and covered the Convention and hate

crimes, among other subjects. In October 2020, judges and public prosecutors had participated in a hybrid training course delivered by the Council of Europe that related to the work of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture. Other relevant courses, including a course on offences of torture committed by police officers, had been delivered in 2022 and 2023.

53. The Government had not received any requests for the extradition of individuals charged with committing acts of torture. The conditions governing extradition were set out in article 51 of the Law on International Cooperation Relating to Criminal Matters. Article 46 of that law established that extradition requests would not be granted if the subject of the request would not be guaranteed a fair trial or if he or she would face a risk of being subjected to torture or other degrading treatment. Extradition was regulated by the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters of the Council of Europe, the protocols to that Convention and the bilateral agreements that North Macedonia had entered into with other countries. The European Convention was in the process of being ratified.

54. By law, all victims of criminal offences, including offences relating to torture and victims of domestic violence, had the right to apply for compensation. Under the Law on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence, a committee responsible for supporting victims of domestic violence had been established in February 2024. The committee was composed of a Supreme Court judge, a public prosecutor, a psychiatrist, a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and a representative of an NGO. The members of the committee had a four-year mandate. The committee had not yet begun to process requests for compensation for offences relating to torture. The Government had, however, paid compensation to a number of individuals in compliance with judgments issued by the European Court of Human Rights.

55. Between 2019 and 2023, 30 individuals had been convicted of violating articles 142 and 143 of the Criminal Code, which related to torture and ill-treatment. In some of those cases, probationary sentences had been handed down to the perpetrators and, in four cases, the charges had been dropped.

56. The problem of unregistered persons dated back a number of years. Most unregistered persons were Roma from the northern part of the country whose births had not been registered and who had therefore been prevented from exercising certain rights, including their right to health insurance. A law on unregistered individuals, adopted in 2020, now ensured their access to education and health services. Although that law partially resolved the problem of non-registration, the Government had set itself the goal of ensuring that no North Macedonians would be unregistered by the end of 2023. In 2020, the Civil Registration Law had been amended to align it with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Under the amended law, all children born in North Macedonia were guaranteed the right to receive a birth certificate within 48 hours of their birth.

57. The decision of the Judicial Council to dismiss its President from her post had been overturned by the Administrative Council, and she had then been reinstated in her post. Measures were being taken to amend the Law on the Judicial Council in line with recommendations made by a number of international bodies. Some recommendations that could be acted on without the law being amended were already being implemented.

58. **A representative of North Macedonia** said that there were 34 general police stations in North Macedonia that were equipped with facilities for detaining persons whose right of movement was restricted. Efforts were made to ensure that the equipment in those facilities was in compliance with the recommendations made by the international organizations that monitored the facilities. In recent years, considerable progress had been made in ensuring that the facilities met minimum international standards, and many of them now did so.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.