



# International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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## Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 113th session

### Summary record of the 3083rd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 7 August 2024, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Shepherd (Vice-Chair)

## Contents

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention (*continued*)

*Combined twentieth to twenty-seventh periodic reports of the Islamic Republic of Iran*

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*Ms. Shepherd (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.*

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

**Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention** (*continued*)

*Combined twentieth to twenty-seventh periodic reports of the Islamic Republic of Iran (CERD/C/IRN/20-27; CERD/C/IRN/Q/20-27)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran joined the meeting.*

2. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that, by implementing the Convention, his country was firmly indicating its respect for the treaty bodies and their methodology, based on mutual respect in the promotion and protection of human rights. Iran had long been a country unified in diversity, a place where communities of different ethnicities and cultures resided and prospered. None of those communities was “minor”, and all had played a major role in building the country. Diversity was enshrined in the Constitution, according to which all the country’s people, irrespective of their tribe or ethnic group, enjoyed the same rights. Neither colour, nor race, nor language, nor any other consideration conferred special privilege, and all members of the nation, men and women, were equally protected under the law. Those concepts, enshrined in the country’s religion and culture, had been the main rationale behind the State’s accession to the Convention, in 1968.

3. The Islamic Republic of Iran attached great importance to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001. The Declaration and Programme of Action embodied the firm commitment of the international community to tackle racism and constituted a strong moral foundation for advocacy efforts worldwide.

4. The State party strove to implement the Convention and the Committee’s recommendations, but its efforts to do so were severely undermined by the unilateral coercive measures that had been applied against it. Those measures were causing extensive damage to all aspects of life in the country and hampering the advancement of development projects. They were discriminatory and, in many cases, amounted to crimes against humanity. Their impact had been acknowledged by United Nations officials, including the Secretary-General and the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights. The country also hosted millions of foreign refugees and displaced persons, mostly from Afghanistan, a responsibility that drained national resources and was neither duly recognized nor responsibly shared by the international community.

5. The State party’s periodic report addressed the latest developments in the legal, judicial and administrative frameworks aimed at countering discrimination, supporting disadvantaged areas, empowering women and ensuring non-discrimination in the enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. The text had been compiled with input from official institutions, civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). During the period covered by the report, the Islamic Republic of Iran had had three Governments, but they had all shared the same goal of comprehensive national development and the eradication of poverty and discrimination, thanks to which three national development plans had been implemented and many development projects had been completed.

6. **Mr. Balcerzak** (Country Rapporteur) said that, in the light of the fact that article 19 of the Constitution specified that “all people of Iran” were to enjoy equal rights, the Committee wished to know if that equality applied to citizens only, or if it extended to all persons in the territory or under the jurisdiction of the State party. Since the same article stated that “neither colour, nor race, nor language, nor any other consideration conferred special privilege”, he would like to find out whether that meant that no special and concrete measures could be taken to protect ethnic and religious minorities, as envisaged in articles 1 and 2 of the Convention.

7. He wished to know if and when the Convention had been ratified by the Islamic Consultative Assembly, as required by the Constitution, and how conflicts between the Convention and domestic law were resolved. It would be useful to know whether the Convention could be directly invoked before the courts. He would be interested to learn more about the bill entitled “the book of disciplinary measures”, referred to in the State party’s report, whether or not it had been adopted, how it defined discrimination and what penalties it contemplated. Similarly, he wished to know what procedures and remedies were envisaged in the Legal Certainty Document which, according to the periodic report, upheld equality before the law for all persons, regardless of gender, race, colour, language, religion or political beliefs.

8. The delegation was invited to inform the Committee whether the 2015 Code of Criminal Procedure included provisions that enabled persons from ethnic or linguistic minorities to benefit from legal aid and, if necessary, from the services of an interpreter. Lastly, he wished to know if the Convention had been translated into Persian and other national languages spoken in the country and whether it was available on official government websites.

9. **Mr. Gwalawala Sibande** (Country Task Force) said that he hoped to receive population statistics disaggregated by tribe and ethnic origin, as those in the periodic report were disaggregated only by religion. It would also be helpful to know if the State party systematically collected disaggregated statistics on citizens, non-citizens, refugees, migrants, stateless persons and asylum-seekers. He hoped to receive statistics disaggregated by ethnicity on the country’s current prison population, particularly with regard to persons serving long sentences or facing the death penalty. It would be useful for the Committee to hear whether the principle of self-identification would be applied in the population census of 2026 and whether it had already been used in the census of 2016.

10. He hoped the delegation could provide information about minority religious groups and explain what steps were being taken to amend the constitutional provision whereby only Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians were recognized as religious minorities and had the right to practise their religions and administer their personal affairs according to their own canons. He understood that Sunni Muslims were not considered to constitute a religious minority. However, he hoped the delegation could provide statistics about the Sunni Muslim population and explain whether they enjoyed equality with Shiite Muslims under the Citizenship Rights Charter, which emphasized the rights of religious minorities and ethnicities, regardless of social or political affiliations.

11. He would appreciate it if the delegation could provide statistics on political opposition parties and explain if and how they were able to register and operate freely in the country. He wished to know whether Iranic, Persian, Kurdish, Turkic, Arab, Gilak, Mazandarani, Lur, Talysh, Baloch, Turkmen and Kazakh people were among the 28 million beneficiaries of the medical insurance programme for rural families. Lastly, in view of the fact that 17 per cent of the working population was employed in the public sector, he wished to know what steps were taken to ensure that recruitment was fair and representative of the ethnic and religious groups in the country, and inclusive of both Sunni and Shiite Muslims.

12. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that successive Governments had always sought to combat discrimination in all its forms. The Constitution, State policy and the guidance of the Supreme Leader all laid emphasis on the importance of non-discrimination and of justice and the rule of law. In pursuit of those aims, the current Government had issued and adopted the Citizenship Rights Charter and the Judicial Transformation Document, and it had approved a directive on “citizenship rights in the administrative system”. Men and women enjoyed equality before the law, and the Labour Law explicitly prohibited wage discrimination on grounds of colour, race, language, ethnicity or gender.

13. All the country’s five-year development programmes aimed to promote social justice and social capital, reduce inequalities, improve public access to information, provide free health-care services and equal educational opportunities, enhance food security, protect human and citizenship rights and identify and preserve the country’s historical identity. Since discrimination was one of the roots of corruption, the anti-discrimination measures taken to

curb discrimination in the five-year programmes had also had the effect of reducing corruption, as well as contributing to social welfare and improving equality and security.

14. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that, under the Constitution, the Government was obliged to take appropriate measures to enforce the prohibition of all forms of unjust discrimination. In fulfilment of that obligation, and in order to strengthen national unity and guarantee the privacy of citizens, the data gathered during censuses were not disaggregated by ethnicity, religion or language. Rather, the censuses were designed to produce data that could be used to analyse the socioeconomic situation in each province. There had been a vast influx of refugees following the decision by the United States of America to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan in 2021.

15. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that a national centre had recently been established with the mandate of analysing the situation of women. The aim of its work was to identify areas where further efforts were required to reduce inequality and ensure that women from all ethnic groups and regions were able to flourish and participate fully in public life. In 2023, a number of organizations had gathered data on women in relation to areas such as research and education, population and the family, rights and security, labour and employment, political participation and decision-making, social support, health and culture. Their reports had been made publicly available on the website of the new centre and that of the Department of Women and Family Affairs. Steps had also been taken to conduct a comprehensive mapping of women in the country, taking into account their geographic location and economic situation. The Government had distributed its budget to different provinces around the country on the basis of the needs identified through the mapping, with a focus on the most deprived areas. Public spending on activities beneficial to women had a number of goals, such as tackling social problems, strengthening political participation, improving health, promoting economic empowerment and providing training. The results of the mapping had been uploaded to the website of the national centre and a monitoring mechanism had been put in place to assess the progress made.

16. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that, under the regulations governing prisons, the information routinely recorded on inmates included details on their age, gender, health, disability status and type of offence and punishment. No data was gathered on their ethnicity. According to the regulations, the dignity and rights of prisoners must be upheld and they must not be subjected to any form of discrimination on a number of specified grounds, including race, age, language, religion, social status and health status. Prisoners belonging to religious minorities were entitled to have access to their holy book and consultations with a member of their religion.

17. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that, under the Civil Code, all international treaties signed by the Government were considered to be the law. According to the Constitution, international treaties must be approved by the Islamic Consultative Assembly, although that decision could be reviewed by the Council of Guardians if the latter deemed any provisions to run counter to the principles of sharia law or the Constitution. Guidance had been published on how international treaties should be applied and invoked by courts, and legislators were always careful to ensure that new bills and legislative amendments were compatible with the country's international obligations. Information on specific cases where judges had invoked the Convention had been included in the periodic report.

18. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that, since all of the country's inhabitants were of the same race, the problem of racial discrimination did not exist in the country. Accordingly, there was no need to develop specific legislation on racial discrimination. However, there were various provisions in domestic law prohibiting discrimination in matters ranging from the salaries paid to civil servants to the admission of students to postgraduate education. The Citizenship Rights Charter prohibited the insulting or humiliation of ethnic groups and a host of laws had been passed to ensure that people living in the most deprived areas of the country received special support from the Government.

19. **Mr. Balcerzak** said that he wished to know whether the Convention had been translated into Persian and the languages of the country's ethnic minority groups and where

members of the public could access the text of the Convention. It would also be helpful to know whether foreign nationals were protected under domestic law against discrimination, including on the grounds of race, national origin and ethnic origin.

20. **Mr. Gwalawala Sibande** said that paragraphs 118–123 of the State party’s periodic report referred to the country’s different ethnic languages and cultures. He invited the delegation to share any statistical information it held on the groups in question. The Committee had received reports suggesting that their members faced discrimination. He would also welcome any information gathered on those groups for the purpose of providing them with services, since that would illustrate the Government’s efforts to care for those parts of the population. The Committee would find it useful if the delegation could describe the situation of Sunni Muslims in the country.

21. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would like to know whether the State party had taken any steps towards establishing a comprehensive national human rights institution in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

22. **Ms. Tlakula** said that, according to the periodic report, the collection of information on the ethnic composition of the population would be problematic because many people considered their identity to be a combination of several ethnicities. However, that should not pose a problem, if the information was collected on the basis of self-identification. The Committee had highlighted the importance of the availability of court interpretation services in its previous concluding observations.

23. **Mr. Kut** said that the purpose of the dialogue was for the Committee and delegation to engage in a positive discussion that would contribute to their respective efforts to deal with challenging issues related to the State party’s implementation of the Convention. It was not helpful for the delegation to read out constitutional and legislative provisions that had been designed to ensure the equality of citizens, since the Committee had already taken note of them during its previous reviews. The Committee would be far more interested to hear what progress had been made towards eliminating racial discrimination over the preceding 14 years.

24. Similarly, it would not be possible to engage in a truly constructive dialogue if the delegation simply refused to acknowledge the presence of different ethnicities in the country. The Committee insisted on the need to receive information on the country’s ethnic composition so that it could establish a clearer picture of the nature of any discrimination that such groups might face.

25. **Mr. Guissé** said that there was not a single country in the world that did not face challenges concerning discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnicity. Moreover, as mentioned in the periodic report, the Islamic Republic of Iran was home to one of the most ancient and richest civilizations in the world and, as a general rule, countries with richer histories tended to encounter more complex challenges. According to the periodic report, the Council for the Reconciliation of Ethnicities and Minorities had been established in 2015. He would welcome further information about its mandate and about the specific ethnic conflicts it had been tasked with resolving. There was also a reference to “supportive measures for less endowed regions, to eliminate discrimination”. That wording suggested that people were experiencing discrimination on the basis not of their ethnicity, but of the area in which they lived. He would be interested to know what specific measures had been taken to eliminate the prejudice they faced.

26. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would like to know whether all the country’s anti-discrimination measures were fully compatible with article 1 of the Convention. It would also be useful to know whether complaints concerning racial discrimination could be filed directly before a court and, if so, how many complaints of that nature had been brought before a judge over the previous 14 years.

27. The Committee had received very little information from civil society organizations. He wished to know how many civil society organizations were currently working to eliminate discrimination, whether they had been subjected to intimidation or reprisals and to what

extent the Government had consulted them when preparing for the dialogue with the Committee.

28. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the text of the Convention was available on the website of the research centre of the Islamic Consultative Assembly. In its legislation, the State party had adopted the definition of racial discrimination set out in article 1 (1) of the Convention. If the members of the Committee visited her country, they would see for themselves that racial discrimination did not exist there. The country's people all belonged to one race and identified themselves first and foremost by their nationality. The various ethnicities were simply the constituent parts of a single being – the Iranian people.

29. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the legislative system was guided by the principle that no people should be given preference on the grounds of their skin colour, ethnicity or any other human feature. Under the Constitution, everyone was equal before the law.

30. The Convention had been translated into Persian, and information on all the instruments to which the country was a party was taught in universities, including to trainee judges. Examples of cases in which judges had invoked the Convention would be provided in writing. The contents of international instruments were in keeping with the mentality and way of functioning in the country. Judges took an oath to act without discrimination and had a duty to uphold international instruments. Any judges found to discriminate against a party would be prosecuted on an equal footing with ordinary civilians and faced removal from their posts. Legislators could not adopt laws that gave preference to a particular faith or ethnicity.

31. The Holy Prophet of Islam had promoted non-discrimination and had forbidden any insult to religions, which was one of the reasons for his popularity and the spread of Islam, including to Persia. The domestic law made no distinction between Shiite and Sunni Muslims; they were treated in the same manner, including by the courts.

32. The High Council for Human Rights had been established by approval of the Supreme National Security Council and a number of senior government officials. It could receive complaints, including from members of minorities, and refer them to the appropriate body.

33. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that there were a number of judicial and other mechanisms for the realization of individual and social rights, including the General Inspection Organization and various NGOs. Decision-making bodies were also taking measures in that field. A bill had thus been presented in 2021 that would establish an independent national human rights institution. There had been two readings of the bill in the parliament before it had been sent back to the relevant legal departments for amendment. The bill very much remained on the Government's agenda.

34. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the provision of government services was completely unrelated to the language, ethnicity or race of the beneficiaries and that all citizens were equal in freedoms and opportunities. Historically, there had been considerable diversity in the population, but everyone was considered to be Iranian. For that reason, the inclusion in the census of questions about religion, ethnicity or language would not add any value for decision-making. In accordance with the Constitution, Sunni Muslims were not considered a minority; they were part of the Muslim majority. They enjoyed social, civil, legal and religious rights, including the right to stand for elected office and to equality in matters of civil status and inheritance. Local authorities in predominantly Sunni areas were free to govern in accordance with the tenets of their faith. Hundreds of NGOs were active in the promotion of national convergence, cultural diversity and non-discrimination, inter alia by organizing festivals and exhibitions.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.40 p.m. and resumed at 4.50 p.m.*

35. **Mr. Balcerzak** said that, while the Committee had carefully prepared its dialogue with the State party, the fact remained that much had happened in the 14 years since the State party had last sent a delegation to appear before the Committee. There had been some positive developments, but also a considerable number of negative ones. The Committee thus had a number of questions about the national legal framework.

36. He wished to know whether the Government planned to establish a national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles and whether it had plans to adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination law. The Committee would welcome information on the membership, powers, mandate, operations and effectiveness of the High Council for Human Rights. To what extent did its activities include coordinating national policies on human rights and promoting the prohibition of racial discrimination?

37. He was curious to know how hate speech was defined in the Islamic Penal Code, what the penalties were for offences related to hate speech and whether the delegation could provide specific examples of the relevant provisions being applied in recent years.

38. He would also like to hear about the rationale for the amendments made to the Islamic Penal Code in 2021, including the introduction of article 499 bis on insult to ethnicities, and about cases in which that article had been applied. He would welcome comments on concerns that the vaguely worded national security offences contained in articles 286, 500 and 610 of the Code were used to persecute members of ethnic and religious minorities when they exercised their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. Comments would also be welcome regarding the Government's intention to revise or repeal some of its laws in the light of those widespread concerns. How did the Government ensure that the law was not applied in a selective or arbitrary manner to target members of specific groups and did not limit civic space and legitimate political dissent? Why had the country's criminal law been amended to become more repressive, and what results, expected or otherwise, had thus been achieved?

39. He wished to learn about the 1977 Penal Code provisions regarding the propagation of racial discrimination and about specific examples of the practical implementation of the Law on the Activities of Political Parties and Groups. The delegation was invited to address the concern that the Amended Press Law of 2009 restricted freedom of expression and of the press and to provide specific examples in which the Press Supervisory Board had taken action with regard to hate speech.

40. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that court interpretation services were available when necessary, and the failure to provide them was grounds for appeal.

41. The High Council for Human Rights, led by the head of the judiciary, was composed of 15 senior officials, including the Ministers of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Justice, Intelligence and Foreign Affairs, the head of the armed forces and the director of prisons. The High Council produced guidance, monitored developments in human rights questions and received complaints of human rights violations irrespective of the status of the alleged perpetrator.

42. Efforts to combat all forms of discrimination included the amendment of the Islamic Penal Code, the introduction of oversight of the judicial function, the adoption of laws for the advancement of specific groups, such as young people, a review of the organization of prisons and the provision of training. The addition of article 499 bis of the Islamic Penal Code, on insult to ethnicities, religions or the Islamic faith, was designed to prevent violence and tensions. Breaches of the article carried the penalty of a fine, and harsher penalties were applicable if the violations were committed by civil servants in exercise of their functions or with the use of the media or the Internet. Some eight years prior, two people had been convicted after posting footage of insults online. Public servants who were found to have deprived people of their constitutional rights were removed from their functions. For example, public servants who had denied an individual access to an entrance examination, and thereby admission to university, had been dismissed.

43. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that non-discrimination was addressed in a number of articles of the Constitution, as well as by Islam. Minority languages could be used in the media. The publication of divisive and discriminatory rhetoric and hate speech was banned under the Amended Press Law, which also provided for oversight of the mass media. The Law and its implementing regulations had been amended in such a way as to cover new technologies and media. Academia was involved in monitoring the media, alongside the judiciary. Media outlets that published or spread hate speech of any kind were liable to prosecution and punishment. The Law specified that the mass media must not carry

insulting language; it prohibited the fomenting of discrimination or hatred and the instrumentalization of persons of either sex. The publication of any content offensive to women, minorities or ethnic groups was punishable under the Islamic Penal Code, and any repeat offence could entail the revocation of the licence of the media outlet in question.

44. The Press Supervisory Board oversaw the granting of licences for the mass media. By law, the composition of the Board must include judges and representatives of the Ministry of Culture, the parliament, academic circles and managers of press outlets or publications. The Board's decisions were subject to review by a body consisting of persons of high standing from different walks of life and social circles.

45. The Board's recommendations must follow the principle of equality and ensure the avoidance of hate speech, which was deemed to undermine the unity and solidarity of the people. The Board held online examinations to confirm that applicants for press licences rejected racial discrimination, and it also held briefings for applicants. It held consultations with managers of media outlets and organized training sessions for journalists, and it circulated information on the rules and regulations applicable to the media to ensure that hate speech found no place in the production of media outlets. As a result, the number of offences was generally very low. The few violations that had occurred had been dealt with in accordance with the law. In one example, newspapers had published material that stoked fear of Afghan refugees and other foreigners, and the case had been brought to court. In the preceding two or three years, there had been no cases where hate speech had resulted in penalties or the repeal of the licences of any publications.

46. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that a working group of the Ministry of Justice and a high official within the Ministry monitored virtual spaces to detect criminal content. When they found content that undermined national unity, fomented division, carried hate speech or portrayed a bleak image of society, or that sowed seeds of division and discord among different groups, they issued orders to remove it, and the respective Internet service providers were obliged to comply. In the previous three years, some 350 offences had been identified. Most involved jokes or humour that were unintentionally offensive to ethnic groups; others were insulting to religious groups. Those cases had been identified and, about 90 per cent of the time, had been immediately removed from the Internet.

47. The Inspection Organization of Iran oversaw the implementation of the country's laws by its administrative bodies. It had received some 50,000 complaints from the public in about three years and had investigated and resolved nearly 90 per cent of those cases. The head of the judiciary had travelled to 12 provinces in 2023 and had heard over 11,000 cases and complaints. Complaints could be lodged by telephone or email, and an additional 27,000 cases had been handled by local judiciary service desks.

48. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the Government had in 2021 presented a bill providing for the establishment of a national human rights institution, and the bill had been considered by various parliamentary committees in 2022 and 2023. It had since been sent back to the Government for review, with the involvement of a range of organizations and stakeholders, including the human rights departments of the judiciary.

49. **Mr. Balcerzak** said that he would like to hear examples of the use of the criminal law to penalize insults, for example against the Kurdish or Baloch populations.

50. **Mr. Gwalawala Sibande** said that the Committee would appreciate clarification regarding the Citizenship Rights Charter, and specifically to find out whether it had the status of a policy or a law. Noting that the Constitution recognized only Jews, Zoroastrians and Christians as religious minorities free to perform their rites and ceremonies, he said that the Committee was aware of the existence of other religious groups in the country. He asked the delegation to explain why such a status had been granted only for specific religions. The Committee would like to find out whether political opposition parties freely exercised their rights in the country and were fully able to register and take part in political life.

51. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would appreciate it if the delegation could provide information about civil society organizations that had been consulted or taken part in the process aimed



at establishing the national human rights institution. Had civil society organizations been consulted in the run up to the State party's dialogue with the Committee, and if so, which?

52. **Ms. Tlakula** said that, in her capacity as Follow-up Coordinator, she wished to point out that the Committee had never received the supplementary information that it had requested in its preceding concluding observations. The Committee would like to know the current status of the bill that would establish a national human rights institution and to hear whether its provisions were in line with the Paris Principles.

53. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that he would like to ask the delegation whether there were any Ahmadis living in the country, and if so, whether they were considered as Muslims.

54. **Mr. Guissé** said that he would like to know how the unilateral coercive measures cited by the delegation and in the periodic report affected the ability of the State party to implement the Convention.

55. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the Citizenship Rights Charter included provisions to protect the rights of citizens in respect of actions taken by both the executive branch and the judiciary. Every year, members of those branches were convicted for violations of the rights protected by the Charter. The Government carried out on-the-job training for members of the judiciary to inform them of the rights provided under the Charter. As a result, the number of reported offences had recently declined.

56. The rights of religious minorities were protected in particular by the eight-article command issued by the country's Supreme Leader shortly after the revolution, which was still in force. It restricted the authorities' ability to search people and to limit their personal freedom.

57. Noting that racial discrimination was still widespread globally, he called on the Committee to pay special attention to such phenomena in certain other countries. The society in the Islamic Republic of Iran was mixed; members of the Persian, Azeri, Baloch or Kurdish ethnic groups intermingled and intermarried. In the view of the parliament, all of the population groups were treated equally, with everyone having an equal status under the law.

58. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the Citizenship Rights Charter further elaborated upon the rights generally set out in the Constitution and established guidelines to safeguard the rights of the country's people.

59. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the activities of over 140 political parties were governed by a law adopted in 2016. A committee composed of representatives from the three branches of government issued authorizations for activities by political parties, and to date, none had been revoked. The legislation governing political parties specified that hate speech, the spread of suspicion and discord and the pronouncement of insults against ethnic groups disqualified applicants from receiving such authorization.

60. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the country's official religion was Islam and that any faiths or factions within Islam, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Judaism were recognized by the State. Members of the Sunni Muslim community sat in the parliament and other official bodies, and there were over 650 Sunni schools and some 17,000 Sunni mosques in the country. Areas with significant Sunni populations were often governed by local Sunni politicians. The delegation had not received any specific information according to which the situation of Ahmadi people in the country was problematic.

61. **The Chair** said that she wished to assure the delegation that the Committee held all States parties accountable for eliminating racial discrimination.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*