



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

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Summary record of the 2186th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 16 April 2025, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Heller

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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)*

Eighth periodic report of France (CAT/C/FRA/8; CAT/C/FRA/QPR/8)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of France joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of France**, introducing her country's eighth periodic report (CAT/C/FRA/8), said that she welcomed the presence of representatives of French civil society, namely the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights and the Defender of Rights, at the current meeting. Respect for human rights and the prohibition of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment remained core priorities of French foreign policy. To mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 2023, the President had made several commitments, including the hosting of the ninth World Congress against the Death Penalty, scheduled to take place in Paris from 30 June to 2 July 2026. France remained firmly committed to denouncing the use of torture and ill-treatment as tools to suppress political dissent and restrict civic space. In collaboration with international partners, it had organized the first World Congress on Enforced Disappearances in Geneva at the end of January 2025. While France already applied European regulations concerning trade in certain goods which could be used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, it also continued to actively support, as a member of the Alliance for Torture-Free Trade, the development of a binding international legal instrument to regulate such trade.
3. The Government had also strengthened national efforts to prevent human rights violations through a range of training initiatives. Particular emphasis had been placed on the use of force in police operations. Law enforcement officers were permitted to use force strictly within the bounds of the law, only when necessary, and in a manner proportionate to the objective pursued or the severity of the threat faced. All police operations were conducted under the close supervision of senior officers and, in cases involving serious offences, judicial authorities were brought in to intervene. In addition, the Government had reformed legislation concerning law and order, and, under judicial oversight, had enhanced training and operational readiness. The National Policing Plan, adopted in 2021, had introduced improved strategies for the deployment of riot police during public demonstrations.
4. The national legal framework upheld the dignity and rights of all individuals held in custody, notably guaranteeing the right to notify a person of their choice of their detention, the right to remain silent and the right to medical care and immediate legal assistance. Several important reforms had been introduced in 2024 to strengthen those protections. The Government remained firmly committed to addressing prison overcrowding and improving detention conditions. A special right to remedy had been introduced pursuant to a law adopted on 8 April 2021, which safeguarded the right to dignity in detention, and a decree on legal aid had been adopted. In addition, the Ministry of Justice was pursuing a proactive and coordinated prison regulation policy that made the development of alternatives to incarceration a priority, enhanced early-release mechanisms to support a gradual, supervised return to society and included a major prison infrastructure initiative, with plans to create 15,000 new prison places. Ensuring the safety of prison staff was also a key concern; her thoughts were with those affected by the recent attacks on prison facilities across the country.
5. Measures had been taken to enhance the quality of care in prisons, with a particular focus on improving psychiatric services and regulating the use of solitary confinement in medical units within prisons and prison hospitals, in order to better safeguard the rights of individuals deprived of liberty. A proactive suicide prevention policy was currently being pursued across the prison system. Efforts to prevent and address gender-based violence in places of detention had also been strengthened, including targeted training for prison staff. In addition, increased structural investments and financial resources had been allocated to support the expansion of psychiatric services, improve the quality of care for patients and provide specialized training for healthcare staff in managing violent situations.
6. The Act of 26 January 2024 on immigration had introduced a series of significant reforms in that field, including the establishment of "France Asylum" support centres and

local branches of the National Court of Asylum, the simplification of litigation procedures involving foreign nationals and the strengthening of protection measures for the most vulnerable asylum-seekers. The Act had also ended the detention of families with minors, had introduced administrative fines for employers and managers who knowingly employed foreign nationals without residence permits and had laid the groundwork for a pilot programme aimed at the comprehensive review of foreign nationals' residence rights. In December 2023, the Government had launched its third National Plan to Combat the Exploitation and Trafficking of Persons, covering the period 2024–2027. A national law enforcement plan, coordinated by the Central Office for Combating Trafficking in Persons, was also being implemented, alongside the country's first national strategy to combat prostitution and sexual exploitation.

7. France was not under an obligation to ensure the inapplicability of a statute of limitations to the stand-alone offence of torture under the Convention. However, when acts of torture constituted the underlying offence of a crime against humanity, they were not subject to any statute of limitations.

8. France remained firmly committed to combating hateful behaviour, discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech, particularly in the digital sphere. That commitment was reflected in several key initiatives, including the establishment of the National Unit for Combating Online Hate within the Paris public prosecutor's office in 2020 and the launch of the National Plan for Equality and against Anti-LGBT+ Hatred and Discrimination for the period 2023–2026. In May 2024, the Government had also announced the establishment of a new non-governmental body, the Christchurch Call Foundation, tasked with coordinating efforts to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online. The adoption of the Act of 21 May 2024 on the regulation of the digital space further underscored the country's determination to address hate speech and ensure a safer online environment.

9. The Government's initiatives in the aforementioned areas extended to all French territories, including the overseas territories. A new interministerial committee for overseas territories had been set up in July 2023. In New Caledonia, the Government had been particularly active in ensuring public safety during the recent riots. Emergency measures had been deployed to help the business community and local authorities, while the mediation and working mission launched by the President continued its efforts to renew dialogue with local political stakeholders. In Mayotte, the Government had carried out operations to restore public order and address illegal immigration and had expedited the processing of asylum applications. In the aftermath of Cyclone Chido, which had caused significant destruction and resulted in a tragic loss of life, the Government had mobilized substantial resources to support recovery and relief efforts.

10. **Mr. Contesse** (Country Rapporteur) said that he wished to better understand why France, in an area as sensitive as the prohibition of torture, and in the light of the numerous and repeated recommendations of the Committee, persisted in refusing to incorporate into its legislation a precise definition of the crime of torture. Given the importance given by the State Party to case law, he wondered whether the delegation could provide examples of judicial decisions showing how the courts had defined the constituent elements of the crime of torture. The Committee reiterated its recommendation that the State Party should lift the statute of limitations on the crime of torture, as many countries had already done, on the basis of the Committee's recommendation and the case law of international courts. If the State Party continued to refuse to do so, he would appreciate an explanation of how it could claim that the impunity enjoyed by a hypothetical torturer who escaped criminal prosecution simply because of the passage of time could be consistent with the fundamental principles of law.

11. He also wished to know more about the training mentioned in paragraph 59 of the State Party's report, on the basic aspects of police ethics, especially regarding its periodicity, content and the status of the trainers. He wondered whether training on the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol) was provided to police, gendarmerie and other law enforcement officials. It would also be useful to learn why the State Party had no tools for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of training or education programmes on reducing the number of cases of torture, violence and ill-treatment and whether it planned to introduce such tools.

12. The Committee would welcome up-to-date information on the indicators enumerated in annex 1 of the report, concerning the penalties imposed on national police officers for violations of the fundamental rights of persons deprived of their liberty. The Committee had received reports in line with the concerns previously raised by other human rights treaty bodies about excessive, sometimes fatal, use of force in the State Party, disproportionately involving members of minority groups. Notable cases included those of Adama Traoré, for whose 2016 death following arrest no one had been held accountable, of Luis Bico, whose case was the first in which the courts had interpreted the much-criticized Act No. 2017-258 of 28 February 2017 and the expanded scope of the notion of self-defence contained therein, and of Nahel Merzouk, whose shooting by police had been broadcast around the world. The number of police killings had reportedly multiplied fivefold since the adoption of the Act, and France was the only European country to use explosive ammunition against protesters.

13. Against that backdrop, the Committee would welcome detailed information on any legal, administrative or judicial measures the State Party had taken or was planning to take to step up efforts against excessive use of force, on the findings of the parliamentary commission set up in the wake of Mr. Merzouk's death, on any assessments of the application of Act No. 2017-258 and instructions of the national police thereon, on the evidentiary practices of the judicial authorities and the Inspectorate General of the National Police to determine whether the rule of absolute necessity had been followed in cases where police officers discharged their weapon and on steps taken to address the lack of statistical data regarding complaints and of information on the outcome of cases against police and gendarmerie officers.

14. He wondered why, in reference to the specific case of violence against Kanak protesters in New Caledonia, the State Party had transferred dozens of arrestees to the continent, several thousand kilometres away, potentially in breach of rights of the defence. More generally, he wondered what the rationale was for the State Party's denial of the collective rights of ethnic minorities, as illustrated by its reservation to article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its refusal to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169).

15. The delegation was invited to comment on reports that changes to asylum procedures, in particular the introduction of the fast-track procedure and single-judge decisions, limited the rights of asylum-seekers and weakened protection of the right of asylum. He wished to hear more about the lawyers representing asylum-seekers, specifically how they were selected and their performance was assessed, measures to prevent forced returns and guarantees that the State Party would comply with relevant decisions of the European Court of Human Rights. In the light of reports of the ill-treatment of asylum-seekers and migrants, he also wished to hear more about the measures taken or planned to ensure decent conditions of detention, to protect beneficiaries of international protection in Calais, particularly from excessive use of force, and to safeguard the rights of unaccompanied minors at all times; about the number and outcome of asylum applications filed by unaccompanied minors during the reporting period; and about steps taken to assess the material conditions in which asylum-seekers were living in metropolitan France and overseas territories. He would welcome up-to-date statistics on asylum cases and an explanation as to why no data was available on the number and outcome of appeals against expulsion and extradition decisions lodged on the grounds that the person concerned faced a risk of torture in the country of return.

16. He wished to understand why the Code of Criminal Procedure did not contain the same definition of torture for cases committed in the territory of the State Party as for cases committed abroad. He also wished to understand the State Party's position on extraterritorial jurisdiction and its obligations under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, including with regard to arrest warrants issued by the Court, given the apparent contradiction between its stance on former Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Russian President Vladimir Putin and its stance on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

17. **Mr. Rouwane** (Country Rapporteur) said that the violence seen outside prisons in the State Party in recent days, while regrettable, nonetheless reflected a crisis in the system, as reported by both civil society and government oversight bodies. Despite some efforts, overcrowding persisted, with over 18,000 persons detained in excess of the total operational

capacity as of 1 January 2025 and some facilities being at 200 per cent capacity; more than 4,300 detainees slept on mattresses on the floor. The situation was alarming in the overseas territories, for instance at the Majicavo short-stay prison in Mayotte, which was at over 325 per cent capacity. More than a quarter of persons deprived of liberty were awaiting trial. The Inspector General of Places of Deprivation of Liberty and other oversight bodies reported deteriorating conditions of detention, including rat, cockroach and bedbug infestations, sanitation and electrical facilities in disrepair and insufficient numbers of prison guards.

18. Accordingly, the Committee would welcome information on action taken in response to the recommendation to introduce a binding mechanism prohibiting prisons from exceeding 100 per cent of their capacity, the results of the prison construction programme providing for the creation of 15,000 prison places, the status of the renovation plan announced by the President in 2018 following a visit to the prison in Fresnes and any plans to adopt a comprehensive strategy to reduce the prison population, including urgent measures to realize the fundamental rights and freedoms of persons deprived of their liberty. Given the scant uptake by inmates of the remedies for poor detention conditions introduced in 2021, the Committee wished to hear about the measures the Government intended to take to increase adjusted sentences and alternatives to imprisonment, especially for short sentences, limit the use of pretrial detention and promote immediate release measures.

19. The Committee had been informed that full-body searches, which in some facilities were conducted in inappropriate locations, and disruptive nighttime supervision remained frequent, ultimately to the detriment of detainees' health. It would therefore be interested in hearing about any action taken in response to the recommendations made by national entities, especially those pertaining to respect for the principles of subsidiarity, necessity and proportionality in the context of full-body searches and nighttime supervision, the thoroughness of investigations into alleged infringements of the rights of persons subjected to such searches, the systematic recording of reasoned decisions to conduct full-body searches and nighttime supervision and the notification thereof to the person concerned, training for staff, including in facilities for juveniles, and the development of a specific framework on full-body searches of imprisoned minors.

20. In view of the negative impact of prison overcrowding on healthcare services, he would like to know what measures were being taken to improve inmates' access to healthcare, especially psychiatric and specialist care, and to increase the number of medical personnel. He welcome the delegation's response to concerns that the requirement to submit written requests for medical attention for delivery by prison guards infringed on doctor-patient confidentiality and that the lack of services during nights and weekends caused delayed access to emergency care. He wondered what was being done to improve conditions during transfers for medical treatment and to address the related logistical issues. He wished to hear about any measures to limit the incarceration of persons with severe psychiatric disorders, ensure access to alternative and suspended sentences for medical reasons and improve coordination and planning to ensure continuity of treatment after release.

21. It would be helpful to receive up-to-date statistics on the overall number of deaths in custody, including suicides. He would like to know how many investigations had been conducted into such deaths and how many had led to the prosecution and conviction of prison staff. He would like to hear about the outcome of the assessment of the policy for suicide prevention in prisons which had been scheduled to begin in 2020 and wondered whether a subsequent assessment had already been planned.

22. He wished to know what measures had been taken to implement the recommendations of the Defender of Rights to address the unwarranted use of solitary confinement for disciplinary purposes and to ensure that all such decisions were taken in accordance with the law and the principles of necessity and proportionality. He would be interested to hear the delegation's comments on the fact that the law still allowed for solitary confinement as a disciplinary measure for up to 30 days, that use of the measure had increased in recent years, including for persons with psychosocial disabilities and minors over the age of 16 years, and that doctors often conducted only cursory medical examinations on persons in solitary confinement or were reluctant to make a finding that such a punishment was inappropriate. He wondered whether the Government was considering prohibiting the practice for minors and persons with mental disorders.

23. He would appreciate a response to concerns that persons in special detention regimes or held in units for violent inmates were unable to participate in group activities, education, training or work, were subject to harsh security measures including frequent body searches and routine handcuffing and were often detained far from their families. Additional concerns related to the reportedly vague criteria for placement under such regimes and their application to persons with psychiatric disorders. He would like to know what measures had been taken to reduce the use of special detention regimes, prohibit their use for persons with psychiatric disorders and adapt the regimes to increase the amount of human contact available to inmates and allow restraint measures only when strictly necessary.

24. He wondered what measures had been taken to raise awareness of disability among justice system personnel, including the staff of prisons and detention centres. It would be useful to learn whether there were any plans to increase the use of alternatives to imprisonment when a person's state of health or disability was incompatible with detention conditions. He would like to know what steps would be taken to uphold the rights of prisoners with disabilities, ensure they had appropriate detention conditions and provide them with the necessary support and healthcare, including by facilitating the conduct of needs assessments by departmental centres for persons with disabilities. He would like to hear about any measures taken to make prisons, including visiting areas, accessible to persons with disabilities.

25. He would appreciate the delegation's comments regarding concerns that overcrowding, detention conditions and issues with the recruitment and training of prison staff worsened violence among prisoners and between prisoners and staff and that violent incidents were underreported and inadequately documented. He would also appreciate its comments regarding reports that the prosecution service did not always respond to reports of violence submitted by the Inspector General of Places of Deprivation of Liberty. He wished to know what steps would be taken to ensure that data on violence in prisons were collected and made publicly available. He would be interested to learn about any plans to adopt an effective policy to prevent inter-prisoner violence.

26. He wished to know what would be done to address the unacceptable detention conditions in police stations reported by the Defender of Rights and Inspector General of Places of Deprivation of Liberty and to ensure that handcuffs and restraints were used in accordance with the applicable legal framework. He wondered whether action had been taken to incorporate awareness of drink spiking into police training and ensure the provision of screening kits in police and gendarmerie stations and forensic medical units.

27. He wished to know what had been done to implement the recommendations of the Defender of Rights regarding detention conditions in the Menton and Montgenèvre border police stations, including by punishing members of the security forces who subjected detainees to degrading treatment, applying the European Union Return Directive, implementing the relevant decisions of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the Council of State and ensuring that any deprivation of liberty occurred in a legally defined framework and in conditions ensuring respect for human dignity.

28. He would like to know what would be done to reverse the trend for harsh regimes in immigration detention centres, similar to those in prisons, and ensure that detainees were held in decent conditions and afforded sufficient privacy. He would like to hear about measures taken to improve the material conditions in such centres, including those at the Italian border. He would appreciate information about any steps taken to expand the general prohibition on the detention of minors in such centres to Mayotte and end the practice of falsely associating minors with unrelated adults.

29. He would like to know what had been done to improve detention conditions in the holding areas in airports, ports and stations, particularly with respect to access to adequate food, healthcare, hygiene and sanitation. He wondered whether steps had been taken to ensure that men were held separately from women and adults from children. He wished to know what measures would be taken to facilitate access to such holding areas for civil society organizations and public oversight bodies. In the light of the suicide of a detainee in Marseille airport in 2024, he wished to hear about measures taken to ensure appropriate treatment for vulnerable persons and psychological support for persons in distress. He wondered whether

the State Party planned to establish an independent complaints mechanism to report violence or ill-treatment and to ensure psychological and administrative support for female detainees who had been victims of violence. He would like to learn about steps taken to end the practice of detaining children, whether they were unaccompanied or travelling with their families.

30. It would be useful to receive data on the reasons for the imposition of disciplinary measures on police officers, including the number of such measures that were imposed for excessive use of force. He wished to know the outcomes of proceedings in the 517 cases relating to the use of force processed by the Inspectorate General of the National Police in 2023. He would appreciate a response to concerns that the number of criminal cases relating to the use of violence by public officials had increased while the number of prosecutions had decreased. He would be interested to hear the delegation's comments on allegations of violence against foreign nationals committed during police operations in the Calais and Dunkirk areas reported by the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights and civil society organizations.

31. He wished to know what measures were being taken to restrict the use of force in prisons to situations where it was strictly necessary. He would like to know whether steps had been taken to establish an internal mechanism for the oversight of prison staff conduct as recommended by the Defender of Rights and to improve the training on working with minors for staff in juvenile detention facilities. He wished to hear about any plans to improve complaints and investigation mechanisms in prisons and ensure that acts of violence and ill-treatment by staff resulted in disciplinary measures and, where appropriate, prosecution. He would appreciate a response to reports of serious violence by officials against persons held in immigration detention centres made by the Defender of Rights and the Inspector General of Places of Deprivation of Liberty and would like to know if any measures were planned to ensure that such persons were protected from all forms of violence and that their basic rights were upheld. Lastly, he would like to hear about any measures taken to prohibit the use of tear gas inside police stations and to restrict the use of conductive energy devices, known as "tasers", by law enforcement officers, ensuring respect for the principles of necessity and proportionality.

32. **Mr. Buchwald** said that he would like to know whether the Government had followed up on the case of the Uzbek national deported, despite the indication of interim measures by the European Court of Human Rights, with a view to remedying the situation or ascertaining the whereabouts of the person.

33. **Mr. Kessing** said that he would welcome the delegation's response to widespread criticism of the disproportionate use by the police of stop-and-search measures against ethnic minority groups, as evidenced in reports submitted by national and international non-governmental organizations, a decision of the Council of State and the concluding observations of United Nations treaty bodies. He would like to hear about any steps taken to improve oversight and data collection in respect of stop-and-search measures and ensure they were used in strict compliance with the Convention and other human rights obligations.

34. **Ms. Maeda** said that the Committee wished to know what legislative and procedural steps the State Party had taken to ensure that cases of sexual and incestual violence were investigated and prosecuted and perpetrators convicted, and to strengthen protective measures and support services for incest victims.

35. She would like to know how many mothers had been prosecuted, convicted and sentenced for child abduction; what steps had been taken to protect mothers and children in such cases; and whether mothers had been exempted from prosecution with reference to article 13 (1) (b) of the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, which provided that children in that situation did not have to be returned when to do so would expose them to physical or psychological harm or otherwise place them in an intolerable situation.

36. The Committee would welcome an update on the status of the investigation into acts of sexual abuse allegedly committed by members of the French armed forces in the Dekoa region of the Central African Republic that had been launched in April 2016. It would be helpful to hear what steps had been taken to prevent the commission of such acts and ensure

that public officials who committed them while performing their official duties overseas were prosecuted.

37. She would appreciate up-to-date information on the application of laws providing that the consent of intersex children to treatment must be sought where they were capable of expressing their wishes and participating in related decisions, and on safeguards for ensuring the necessity and proportionality of medical treatment.

38. **Mr. Tuzmukhamedov** said that he wished to know what training in international humanitarian law, and the Convention in particular, military personnel received prior to deployment in peacekeeping operations and whether any post-deployment evaluations in that area were carried out. It would be useful to learn what training police and other law enforcement officials, including rapid deployment and intervention teams, received in the use of tasers and other non-lethal weapons. He wondered what legislative steps the State Party had taken in line with General Assembly resolution 72/163 to prevent and prohibit the production, trade, export, import and use of equipment that had no practical use other than for the purpose of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It would be useful to learn whether the State Party had enacted any legislation similar to article 36 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), which provided that a review of new weapons, means or methods of warfare was to be carried out to determine whether their employment was permitted under international law.

39. **Mr. Liu** said that he would welcome the delegation's comments on reports that, in recent years, the Government had initiated fewer investigations into trafficking in persons and prosecuted and convicted fewer suspected traffickers than previously; that the fund for assisting victims of that crime remained insufficient; that the authorities continued to arrest and prosecute child victims of forced begging and criminality; and that Government efforts to address vulnerabilities with respect to the crime of trafficking in persons on Mayotte, including among the estimated 3,000–4,000 unaccompanied Comorian children there, remained inadequate.

The meeting was suspended at 12.10 p.m. and resumed at 12.30 p.m.

40. **A representative of France** said that France remained of the view that its Criminal Code and case law covered the crime of torture as defined in the Convention and that an amendment introducing an explicit definition of torture was unnecessary. Case law provided that it was necessary to establish that the acts committed were exceptionally serious and had been committed with the intention of denying the victim his or her human dignity. The scope of the definition of torture under French law was in fact broader than it was under the Convention, since it included acts committed without a specific purpose and by any perpetrator. A decision issued by the Court of Cassation on 4 April 2022 demonstrated that the crime must include the element of severe and repeated suffering that unquestionably surpassed the consequences of simple violence and that of the intention to inflict inhuman and degrading treatment on the victim. Such a definition – particularly with respect to the intensity of the violence involved – was in line with that endorsed by the European Court of Human Rights.

41. Acts of torture that constituted the underlying offence of a crime against humanity or genocide were not subject to any statute of limitations. A statute of limitations of 20 years was applied to the stand-alone offence of torture; if acts of torture were committed against a minor, a statute of 30 years, running from the moment that he or she reached the age of majority, was applied. The Government considered those statutes of limitations to be sufficient.

42. **A representative of France** said that police detention was subject to the oversight of prosecutors and judges. A reform enacted in 2024 had strengthened the rights of persons held in police custody. The Inspector General of Places of Deprivation of Liberty operated as an independent authority, which was not the case in all States.

43. **A representative of France** said that, under the law amending the police custody system that had been adopted on 22 April 2024, detainees who had hired a lawyer or requested that one should be appointed for them could not be interviewed until their counsel

was present. Detainees were also now able to inform any third party they wished of their detention. Under article 63-1 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, any person taken into police custody must immediately be informed of his or her rights. Under French case law, any delay in informing such persons of their rights that was not justified by unsurmountable circumstances was considered necessarily detrimental to their interests and could lead to their immediate release and the annulment of their detention by the judicial official overseeing it. The First Civil Chamber had found in a ruling issued on 19 February 2024 that certain situations encountered in the context of protests could constitute insuperable circumstances under which it was necessary to inform detainees of their rights by a different procedure. Detainees were provided with a written copy of their rights in a language that they understood at the outset of their detention.

44. The duration of police custody could be extended beyond 42 hours with the permission of the public prosecutor or investigating judge; in the case of terrorism, it could be extended to 96 hours or 144 hours if there was a serious risk of an imminent terrorist attack in France or if to do so was essential for the purpose of international cooperation. Persons detained in drug trafficking cases could be held for up to 96 hours, owing to the complexity of investigating such crimes.

45. No preventive arrests, which were considered illegal, were made in France. It was possible, for example during protests, to carry out identity checks on participants and to search bags and vehicles with the permission of the public prosecutor. Persons were detained when there were reasonable grounds for suspecting that the person arrested had committed or was in the process of committing an offence punishable by imprisonment. Persons who knowingly participated even temporarily in a group preparing to commit wilful violence against others or destroy or damage property could also be detained. Public prosecutors were always informed when persons were detained and, in some cases, issued instructions for their detention.

46. **A representative of France** said that respecting human dignity and complying with hygiene standards were constant priorities of the Ministry of the Interior. Police and gendarmerie stations were being renovated with funding from the “France Relance” recovery plan in compliance with internal gendarmerie regulations, under which new buildings must have underfloor heating for safety reasons and cells must have a minimum area of 7 m². Senior police officers were responsible for custody conditions, while station chiefs, who were responsible for conditions more generally, were in contact with cleaning companies and monitored compliance with relevant standards. Detainees could be moved to different cells to ensure that custody conditions were met. The Offices of the Inspector-General of the National Police, the Inspector-General of the National Gendarmerie and the Inspector General of Places of Deprivation of Liberty could also carry out checks of cells. The Directorate General of the National Gendarmerie had observed that, at 471 facilities checked, 34 per cent of blankets were clean in 2017, compared with 23 per cent in 2016. Under a public procurement contract signed in 2018, single-use blankets had been made available. While, for safety reasons, detainees did not have continuous access to water, police and gendarmerie officers were obliged to provide them with cups of water on request. Hygiene kits were provided to all detainees; the Directorate General of the National Gendarmerie had found that 97 per cent of 478 facilities checked were fully equipped with them.

47. **A representative of France** said that in 2024, €1.438 million had been spent on single-use blankets for custody cells and €52,000 on hygiene kits. Upgrades to some dilapidated facilities had to be made on a gradual basis but were carried out to strict standards.

48. **A representative of France** said that, in their initial training, non-commissioned gendarmerie officers received 22 hours of instruction in ethics and at least 188 hours of instruction in how to respond safely to situations involving armed and unarmed persons. A great deal of ongoing ethics training was also provided. For example, all officers assuming a command had to complete a course several weeks long that included further instruction in ethics and discussion of complex cases. All armed officers had to complete annual aptitude tests in weapons use and relevant laws and regulations. Flying squad units and surveillance and intervention patrols underwent refresher training at special centres. The gendarmerie had visited and been inspired by the Savatan Police Academy in Switzerland and had established programmes with the help of occupational psychologists that were aimed at de-escalating

conflicts and delaying the use of force for as long as possible. Victims' associations, judicial officials and organizations such as SOS homophobie, the Interministerial Delegation to Combat Racism, Antisemitism and Hatred of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Persons and the Ligue internationale contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme visited facilities to speak with trainee officers.

49. **A representative of France** said that all junior non-commissioned officers in the police who achieved the rank of sergeant completed an 18-hour mandatory course in ethics. All police officers had to complete a 2.5-hour remote course on the code of ethics and all police services had an ethics focal point who monitored and responded to any shortcomings in the service's actions. Victims' associations worked closely with police stations with a view to contributing to a better understanding of victims and the improvement of police training.

50. **A representative of France** said that the National Prison Administration Academy provided trainee prison officers with several hours of theoretical training on various European human rights instruments, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and different sources on prison law. Trainees also received many hours of training on the legal and regulatory framework concerning the use of force that included practical exercises. The Academy and some penal establishments had been experimenting with using virtual reality headsets as part of violence prevention training with a view to adapting teaching methods to young trainees. Interregional departments provided ongoing training which included regular refresher modules on ethics and intervention techniques. The code of ethics was displayed in all penal establishments and professional practice guidelines on the use of force were disseminated. For several years, the concept of dynamic security, which was based on avoiding resorting to the use of force by building positive relationships with prisoners and pursuing non-violent communication with them, had been developed and formed part of initial and ongoing training.

51. **A representative of France** said that all 450 protection and instruction officers at the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons, who were responsible for interviewing asylum-seekers, received both initial and ongoing training in issues relating to the torture and trauma that many asylum-seekers had experienced. More recently, reception officers had also begun to receive such training. Protection and instruction officers received training in the Istanbul Protocol and in interview techniques that took into account the difficulties that victims of torture and trauma experienced with verbalization, which presented a challenge when establishing their need for protection. Such training was provided both by relevant associations and psychologists and by focal points within the Office who devoted additional time to undertaking relevant research with a view to assisting their colleagues in their work.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.