



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

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## Committee against Torture Eighty-second session

### Summary record of the 2195th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 24 April 2025, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Heller

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(*continued*)

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

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

*Third periodic report of Turkmenistan (continued)* (CAT/C/TKM/3; CAT/C/TKM/Q/3; CAT/C/TKM/RQ/3)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Turkmenistan joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Turkmenistan**, resuming his delegation's replies to the questions raised the previous day (CAT/C/SR.2192), said that Turkmenistan regularly provided information, in response to allegations of the enforced disappearance of incarcerated persons, to various bodies of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union, and to individual Governments. Such information included details of the facilities where the persons concerned were being held and of visits to them by their family members; thus, they could not be considered to have disappeared. The Government had repeatedly provided information to the interested parties, which in some cases had led the special procedures of the Human Rights Council to close cases. It would continue to provide such information to the special procedures and other stakeholders. Between 2020 and 2025, the Ministry of Internal Affairs had responded to more than 50 requests for information.
3. Citizens who believed that they had been subjected to degrading treatment could complain directly to a superior law enforcement body. A special procurator visited places of deprivation of liberty weekly to check the legality of the institutions' actions and receive any complaints from inmates. Citizens could also appeal to the Oversight Commission, composed of representatives of the military, law enforcement bodies and the central authorities. In addition, complaints of ill-treatment could be lodged with the Ombudsman.
4. Regarding the individual cases mentioned at the previous meeting with the Committee and in submissions by certain organizations, the law enforcement authorities of Turkmenistan had investigated the allegations of violations of Mansur Mingelov's rights while in detention, including torture and ill-treatment on ethnic grounds, and had found them to be unfounded. The allegation that Mr. Mingelov was being refused an official diagnosis of his medical condition was also untrue. The convicted person had been diagnosed with tuberculous arthritis.
5. According to article 76 of the Criminal Code, convicted persons could be released immediately if they had an illness that prevented them from serving their sentence, on the basis of a court decision and a medical report. In the case of Akmuhammed Bayhonov, an investigation into the former inmate's detention and medical care had found no evidence of any violations. A number of international organizations and representatives of foreign Governments had noted the willingness of Mr. Bayhonov, who lived in Europe, to report any "human rights violation" in Turkmenistan for a certain fee in order to improve his difficult financial situation.
6. Allamurat Khudairamov had been convicted of drug smuggling in 2018 and pardoned in 2020. Three years later, on 16 October 2023, a criminal case had been opened against him under article 338 of the Criminal Code and he had been declared wanted. He had gone into hiding in the mountains under extremely harsh conditions, without food or medicine, and had survived by taking excessive doses of toxic substances containing tramadol hydrochloride. When he had been arrested on 27 November, he had had multiple injuries sustained during his time in hiding. On 30 November 2023, he had died as a result of toxic poisoning from the aforementioned substances. The allegations that his death had been caused by injuries resulting from torture were untrue, as forensic reports had repeatedly concluded. Furthermore, the timeline of his period in hiding and subsequent arrest suggested that the cause of death could not possibly have been injuries resulting from torture.
7. With regard to so-called members of civil society, Dovran Imamov and Serdar Durdylev, for example, had never been remanded in custody or brought to trial, according to the law enforcement authorities. Hudaiberdy Allashov was a chronic alcoholic who had been subject to administrative penalties and had repeatedly tried to extort money from embassy

officials for his alleged civic activities. As he had not been criminally prosecuted, his health could not have been affected by his purported imprisonment, as claimed in the relevant submission.

8. In a case of alleged domestic violence referred to in the Advocates for Human Rights submission, the law enforcement investigation into the death of Guljemal Jumamuradova had concluded that she had committed suicide in a state of drunkenness and jealousy.

9. The misleading information provided by some human rights organizations about the measures taken to prevent Soltan Achilova and her daughter from travelling to Geneva required clarification. On 18 November 2024, doctors had found that a guest who had been staying in Ms. Achilova's home showed signs of either a stroke or an infectious disease. Symptoms of acute respiratory illness and possible nervous system infection had later appeared, requiring immediate isolation of all the patient's recent contacts. The isolation measures had been temporary and had not prevented Ms. Achilova and the family members present in the house from carrying out their planned activities subsequently. The authorities' actions had been aimed solely at protecting public health, both in Turkmenistan and abroad. Claims that Ms. Achilova's isolation was repressive in nature were based on politicized assumptions and ignored the seriousness of the epidemiological situation. Ms. Achilova continued her activities, fabricating subjective information about Turkmenistan and selling it abroad to human rights organizations and the media. Such public relations efforts and attempts to promote herself as a would-be civil rights defender were essentially for personal gain.

10. Turkmenistan had not ceased its contacts with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. While the Government had not signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), it had taken the initiative to discuss the possibility of resuming negotiations on the text and was awaiting a response. ICRC staff had visited places of detention on four occasions and the Government was prepared to consider further requests for visits.

11. The Committee's concluding observations and other relevant documents, such as national action plans, would be published on the website of the Institute of State, Law and Democracy, which had become fully operational in 2023.

12. Immediately after the appeal made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for asylum to be granted to Afghan citizens, Turkmenistan, as a neighboring State, had agreed to provide all the necessary infrastructure for the transport of foreign personnel and Afghan citizens to third countries. Thanks to its policy of neutrality and the mutual trust with all parties to the conflict, Turkmenistan had opened up its border three times in July and August 2023 to prevent casualties, saving the lives of hundreds of members of the Afghan armed forces. Approximately 150 Afghan citizens had been granted temporary residence visas pending their resettlement in European countries, the United States of America and Canada. Under the Migration Act, a stateless person was a person who was not a citizen of Turkmenistan and had no proof of citizenship of any other country. Persons who were determined to be stateless were granted permission to stay in Turkmenistan. Those seeking protection were not subject to removal until all the relevant procedures had been completed.

13. Regarding the renewal of passports of Turkmen citizens abroad, during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Government had introduced amendments to the Migration Act to allow diplomatic missions abroad to renew passports in emergency situations. Between 2021 and 2024, the passports of more than 40,000 Turkmen citizens abroad had been renewed. Regarding the question of issuing new passports outside Turkmenistan, raised by so-called human rights defenders, not all countries in the world could afford to provide such a service, as it required significant financial, human and technical resources. Nevertheless, an initial application for a passport could be submitted electronically. Meanwhile, the Government continued to explore ways to simplify the processing of passports.

14. **A representative of Turkmenistan** said that disciplinary measures in places of detention, including solitary confinement, could only be imposed for wilful violations of the established rules for serving sentences. Punitive measures involving the infliction of pain or

the use of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, corporal punishment or punishment in the form of placement in a dark cell were prohibited.

15. Mandatory courses on the prevention of torture were held in the training facilities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. One of the aims of the training provided was to ensure fair, respectful and safe treatment of all persons in contact with law enforcement officials. The training programme on criminal law, penalties enforcement and criminal procedure had been revised to include such topics as recognizing, documenting and investigating signs of torture and ill-treatment in accordance with the relevant international instruments.

16. Medical personnel received regular training, including a three-day course for doctors working in the penal system, with the participation of international experts, to update knowledge on the diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis and its drug-resistant forms. With regard to the segregation of infected inmates, medical units were present in each penal institution, and prisoners were transferred to a specialized central hospital, if necessary. The administrations of penal institutions, working in close cooperation with the local health authorities, were responsible for the proper implementation of the sanitary, hygienic and epidemiological requirements for the protection of the health of prisoners in places of deprivation of liberty.

17. Members of diplomatic missions and consular posts had the right to visit convicted persons or persons under investigation held in places of detention, in accordance with the procedure laid down in Turkmen law. In practice, a written request was sent through the diplomatic channel to the Ministry of Internal Affairs to agree on the date for and purpose of the visit. The visit was then organized once confirmation was given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For example, visits had recently been organized for the family members of Turkish and Iranian citizens detained in Turkmenistan.

18. There was only one institution for juvenile offenders in the country, which had an occupancy rate of only 22 per cent in April 2025. Convicted female minors were held separately from their male counterparts.

19. Turkmenistan cooperated closely with other countries and international organizations in counter-terrorism efforts, including the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. It fully supported the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The Government had successfully implemented the National Strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism and Countering Terrorism for the period 2020–2024 and was finalizing the Strategy for the period 2025–2030. As a result of those efforts, the Global Terrorism Index 2025 had ranked Turkmenistan among the countries not affected by terrorism.

20. **A representative of Turkmenistan**, noting that the digitalization of the judicial system was ongoing, said that audiovisual equipment had been installed in 94 courtrooms, or 90 per cent of all such facilities, with a view to increasing the transparency, accessibility and fairness of court proceedings. All relevant evidence, including any audio or video recordings, was made available to the accused person.

21. Courses and seminars, which covered such topics as gender equality, the rights of the child and combating torture, were held to familiarize judges and other judicial officials with international human rights instruments. In organizing those learning activities, the Supreme Court took into account the recommendations of relevant international organizations and drew on the experiences of other countries. In the previous five years, more than a thousand judges and other judicial officials had taken part.

22. Under the new version of the Criminal Code, which had entered into force in January 2023, the punishments for a number of crimes had been reduced, and provision had been made for alternatives to detention. All courts had child-friendly rooms that had been set up to ease the fears of minors who were parties to or otherwise involved in legal proceedings. First-time offenders under the age of 18 who had not committed a serious crime were not deprived of their liberty; minors who had committed serious crimes, on the other hand, could be given prison sentences of up to 12 years, down from 15 previously. All court decisions involving minors were reviewed and, as a result of that and other steps, the number of minors

convicted of a crime had fallen by more than a third since 2020. Juvenile crime was not a significant problem. In recent years, only one girl had been found guilty of a criminal offence.

23. Under the Code of Criminal Procedure, trials were to be open to the public unless they concerned State secrets. In any event, the sentences handed down in trials held behind closed doors were made public. Evidence obtained as a result of torture or other unlawful actions could not be invoked in any legal proceedings.

24. Legislative reforms, including the adoption of the Courts Act, had led to improvements to the administration of justice, and there were now judges who specialized in family matters. When a bill that was currently in preparation was made law, family courts would have jurisdiction over all family matters, whether civil or criminal.

25. **A representative of Turkmenistan** said that people accused of a crime, who had the right to remain silent, were presumed innocent until proved guilty. Access to a lawyer was provided as soon as a person was charged or taken into custody, and interpreters were made available upon request. Newly admitted detainees underwent mandatory medical examinations, and the doctor or other health specialist could be held liable for any failure to draw up an accurate record of the examination. Protocols for detainee transfers were in place, and detainees had the right to inform members of their families or other persons close to them of their detention. Statements given by suspects or accused persons were recorded, and, if necessary, the footage, a courtroom screening of which could be requested by the accused person, was transmitted to the court.

26. Notification of the detention of a person suspected of a crime was sent to the procurator's office within 24 hours of the outset of detention. If a minor who was still in education was detained, his or her educational institution was informed of the detention. The Office could order the release of an unlawfully detained person or take part in the questioning of the suspect. No one could be held for more than 24 hours without the authorization of the procurator, who, in criminal cases, could order that a suspect should be held for up to two months. Under the Code of Criminal Procedure, pretrial detention for such lengthy periods was ordered only when necessary.

27. A comprehensive system of safeguards had been put in place to prevent torture and ill-treatment and ensure robust guarantees of the protection of the rights of parties to criminal proceedings. Officials who disregarded those safeguards and guarantees were subject to both disciplinary and criminal penalties.

28. Great efforts were being made, including in cooperation with United Nations agencies, to strengthen national mechanisms for the prevention of trafficking in persons, the protection of victims and the punishment of perpetrators. A law on combating trafficking in persons had entered into force in 2017, three successive action plans had been adopted and the penalties for trafficking in persons, an offence that had been defined more expansively in the updated Criminal Code, had been increased. Amendments to other relevant laws had been made, too. In addition, a commission on which a number of State agencies were represented had been set up to reinforce the three pillars – prevention, protection and prosecution – of his country's efforts to combat trafficking in persons. One of the aims of the latest action plan, adopted in January 2025, was to make cooperation among national agencies, civil society and international organizations more robust.

29. **A representative of Turkmenistan** said that the Ministry of Justice provided support for the activities of his country's Bar associations. There was one independent Bar association in Ashgabat and one in each of the five oblasts (provinces). In recent years, lawyers who were members of those associations had made hundreds of visits to places of deprivation of liberty and participated in a number of seminars, held around the country, on human rights and on domestic violence. The Ashgabat Bar association and the United Nations Development Programme had adopted a plan to improve access to legal representation. An international conference addressing issues such as the independence of lawyers had been held in 2023 in Ashgabat.

30. Legal aid had been provided to parties to nearly 4,000 criminal proceedings since 2000. Such aid had also been provided in 75 civil cases. By law, persons who were involved

in cases related to alimony payments or compensation for workplace deaths or injuries, military veterans, persons with disabilities, pensioners and orphans were entitled to legal aid.

31. **A representative of Turkmenistan** said that there had been no complaints of forced virginity tests from residents of the cities of Turkmenbashi and Balkanabat. In their investigations into possible cases of prostitution or trafficking in persons, however, law enforcement officials could have students or other people undergo medical examinations. Reports that virginity tests were a regular practice were simply untrue.

32. The Interdepartmental Commission on Compliance with the International Obligations Undertaken by Turkmenistan in the Field of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law was responsible for preparing reports on the advisability of ratifying particular human rights instruments. A road map for the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, which had been drawn up in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, had been submitted to the members of the Interdepartmental Commission for their comments, which would be considered by the plenary Commission.

33. **Mr. Buchwald** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would be interested to hear the delegation's views on the reason for the large number of allegations, including from credible international bodies, that the Government regarded as inaccurate. He wished to know what issues were preventing the Government from agreeing to allow ICRC to conduct monitoring visits. While the news that the State Party was considering ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention was welcome, he wondered if it would also consider recognizing the Committee's competence to receive individual complaints under article 22.

34. He would appreciate confirmation that documents such as the National Plan of Action on Human Rights, the concluding observations of United Nations treaty bodies and letters from special procedure mandate holders were published on the website of the Institute for State, Law and Democracy or in national newspapers or otherwise made publicly available in Turkmen and Russian.

35. He wondered what would be done to address the fact that, as the Ombudsman herself had asserted, no complaints had been submitted to her Office. He still wished to know whether she had visited Ovdan-Depe and Akdash Prisons and, if not, why.

36. Given the importance of data collection and analysis for addressing issues with implementation of the Convention, he wished to reiterate the numerous requests for statistics made at the previous meeting. In particular, it would be useful to receive disaggregated data on the occupancy rate in each detention facility, especially the aforementioned two prisons.

37. He wondered how it was determined whether information published by journalists was true, accurate and impartial, as required under Turkmen law, and what the penalties were for publishing information deemed not to meet those criteria. It would be useful to receive statistics on investigations into allegedly untrue, inaccurate or biased information and their outcomes.

38. He would like to know whether the reference to "lawful actions" rather than "lawful sanctions" in the State Party's definition of torture was a deliberate deviation from that set out in the Convention. He wondered whether any legal provision made clear that such actions must be lawful under international, as well as Turkmen, law. It would be helpful to learn which specific provisions of the Criminal Code stipulated that public emergencies and orders from a superior official could not be used as justification for torture and how those provisions were compatible with article 384 of the Code, which made it punishable to disobey an order.

39. He would like to know whether the Government was considering amending its legislation to prohibit amnesties for persons convicted of torture and ensure that no statute of limitations applied to offences of torture. He would be interested to learn whether any provisions allowed superior officials to be held accountable in cases where they knew or should have known about an act of torture yet failed to take reasonable measures to prevent it, even though they had not acquiesced or consented to the act, and, if not, whether it was planned to fill that gap. He would appreciate clarification as to whether liability was established only for deliberate failure to take preventive measures and only for military

officers in times of war. Lastly, he would like to know whether any legal provision stated that necessity could not be used as a defence in cases involving torture.

40. **Mr. Liu** (Country Rapporteur) said that he wished to reiterate the importance of a human rights-oriented culture with respect to domestic violence and an understanding of its relation to Convention obligations. It was essential to empower victims of domestic violence and other forms of torture and ill-treatment to report such crimes to the authorities. He wondered whether the State Party intended to align its legal framework with international standards on the protection of women's and girls' health, ensure safe access to abortion and reduce unwanted pregnancies by ensuring affordable access to contraception, particularly for low income and vulnerable populations. He wished to know what would be done to ensure that healthcare professionals provided safe abortion services to women whose lives or health were at risk owing to pregnancy and protect them from punitive measures for performing legal abortions.

41. It would be useful to receive information about investigations and prosecutions under article 133 of the Criminal Code for consensual same-sex relations and whether any steps had been taken to implement the recommendations of various treaty bodies to repeal the provision. He would appreciate a response to reports of police brutality motivated by the victims' sexual orientation and gender identity and allegations that raids had been conducted on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons following the release of a documentary film about the community. The delegation might respond to allegations that persons who spoke publicly on issues concerning homosexuality risked arrest, torture and ill-treatment, that men suspected of homosexuality were subjected to degrading anal examinations and that homosexual prisoners faced intimidation, humiliation and sexual abuse. He wished to know what measures would be taken to uphold the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons in view of concerns that they risked arbitrary arrest, physical and sexual violence, forced medical procedures and extortion.

42. He would appreciate assurance that the State Party would ensure unhindered and non-discriminatory access to HIV diagnosis and treatment for all, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. He would be interested to hear about any plans to introduce legislation to guarantee patient confidentiality in HIV centres and prevent the disclosure of information about sexual orientation, gender identity or health status to law enforcement agencies. He wondered whether the Government intended to develop a protocol for the treatment of transgender and gender nonconforming persons in line with international medical standards and ensure that healthcare professionals were trained on its implementation. He would like to know whether law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges would be routinely trained on international human rights standards related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

43. He wished to hear the delegation's response to reports that no effective investigations had been carried out into deaths of conscripts apparently related to abusive treatment by superior officers and fellow soldiers. It would be helpful to receive detailed information on the enforcement of article 167 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and article 43 of the Civil Service Act, respectively on the suspension and termination of public officials, and article 227 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, on the use of unlawful measures during pretrial investigations. Lastly, he hoped that Turkmenistan would play a constructive role in international relations with its status as the first and only permanently neutral country recognized in a General Assembly resolution.

44. **Ms. Racu** said that she would appreciate up-to-date statistics on the number of minors, including girls, in remand centres and juvenile detention centres. It would be interesting to hear about training and work programmes for detained juveniles. She would like to know whether such juveniles had access to a complaints mechanism and who was responsible for monitoring the places of their detention.

45. **Mr. Contesse** said that he would appreciate more information on the laws that the State Party had in place for combating terrorism and the legal safeguards they included and on the international organizations with which it was working on counter-terrorism and anti-trafficking efforts and the ways in which it collaborated with them.

46. **A representative of Turkmenistan** said that the Government acknowledged that it needed to improve cooperation with international organizations, even those that had been critical of Turkmenistan, such as Human Rights Watch, with a view to reducing the differences of opinion that existed in some areas. Such cooperation was key to ensuring that the country's views were heard and taken into account.

47. In some of the cases raised by the various committees, the Government disagreed that violations had taken place. The responses submitted by its law enforcement bodies to individual communications and complaints had not always complied with relevant procedures. The Government acknowledged the need to help law enforcement personnel better understand how to prepare such responses. Sometimes the problem lay with the information submitted to the Turkmen authorities, which was not such as to allow the cases concerned to be properly investigated. Information held by different committees and international organizations with respect to the same case could vary radically. Some of the individuals whom the "Prove They Are Alive!" campaign believed to have been disappeared were at liberty in Turkmenistan and even had jobs. The Government was working to correct such erroneous information and acknowledged that it, too, sometimes made mistakes.

48. The Committee's concluding observations would indeed be published on the website of the Institute for State, Law and Democracy. While newly enacted laws and information on major developments were published in newspapers, there were no plans to publish the concluding observations of human rights treaty bodies and communications from special procedure mandate holders in official newspapers; third parties were, however, free to publish them elsewhere, including online.

49. Under Turkmen law, the Ombudsman had the right to visit any penal institution, including those with a strict regime. The timing of visits had to be agreed on with the relevant authorities with a view to ensuring their compatibility with the institutions' rules and procedures; similar restrictions applied in other countries. The Government attached great importance to strengthening the Ombudsman's mandate and ensuring that she had greater access to places of deprivation of liberty so that she could pass on inmates' concerns.

50. Turkmenistan did not keep statistics relating to the impartiality of journalists and the accuracy of the information they published. The Government had precise and reliable information, however, indicating that some individuals whom the Committee had referred to as journalists received payments from associates abroad to write sensational and critical stories of questionable objectivity.

51. The Government was grateful to the Committee for pointing out areas of Turkmen law that were not in compliance with international standards; it was precisely in order to receive such feedback that Turkmenistan had attended the dialogue. The Ministries of Internal Affairs and Justice and the Office of the Procurator General regularly collected suggestions for legislative amendments, analysed them and presented their findings before the parliament and would do the same with the Committee's recommendations.

52. All relevant information regarding domestic violence would be provided to the Committee in writing. Under the Constitution and other laws, citizens had the right to freedom of expression, including where their sexual orientation was concerned. There were no separate provisions on homosexuals under Turkmen law. Turkmenistan respected and studied the recommendations issued by human rights treaty bodies with respect to decriminalizing homosexuality, some of which it had implemented. While Turkmenistan recognized all human rights, it had its own, national approach and followed its own line on certain issues. While there were no recorded cases of torture or cruel treatment of homosexuals, if the Committee provided more details of the allegations it had received then the Government would endeavour to respond more specifically. The country was committed to achieving progress in upholding all human rights, including the rights of sexual minorities.

53. Turkmenistan had followed a policy of permanent neutrality for 30 years and worked actively to promote the values of peace for the achievement of sustainable development. It had made use of its neutral status with the aim of ensuring that there was cooperation, prosperity and security in a region in which there was a heightened risk of terrorism.

54. **A representative of Turkmenistan** said that Turkmenistan was a party to almost all of the 19 international instruments that had been concluded with the aim of combating terrorism, including nuclear terrorism, in addition to multilateral and bilateral agreements in that area. Turkmen law set out an organizational framework for combating terrorism and the powers and obligations of State authorities and voluntary organizations in such efforts and included guarantees of legal and social protection for citizens in that connection. There was a law for preventing money-laundering, including for the purposes of funding terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

55. Information on the visits to different penal institutions carried out by the Ombudsman and her comments following those visits could be found in annual reports published on her Office's official website. There was no problem with overcrowding at prisons; providing occupancy rates for individual facilities would not shed further light on the situation. The Government rejected allegations that the number of juvenile convicts had increased. Very few minors had been criminally prosecuted in recent years and offending by juveniles did not constitute a serious problem in the country. The juvenile detention facility was administered by the Penal Correction Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and monitored by the Ombudsman, special oversight commissions and other institutions.

56. **A representative of Turkmenistan** said that the Government understood the importance of providing statistics as part of its cooperation with international organizations and had made progress in that regard in recent years. Although, currently, under the protocols of the State Statistics Committee, members of the delegation could share only non-disaggregated data expressed in percentages, work to broaden the scope of information that could be provided was ongoing and disaggregated data on socioeconomic issues and political rights were already available.

57. The Government worked closely with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism and the Office of Counter-Terrorism. Turkmenistan had participated in the Behavioural Insights Academy in Doha in 2023, where the spread of terrorist ideologies through the Internet had been discussed.

58. **A representative of Turkmenistan** said that under the Healthcare Act, abortion was permitted until the fifth week of pregnancy, when the fetal heartbeat began. That period was based on the recommendations of the World Health Organization and was intended to minimize risks to mothers' health. If the mother was under the age of 18 years, the written consent of her parents or guardians to the procedure was required. Abortions could be carried out until the twentieth week of pregnancy for certain medical or social reasons if approved by a special commission comprising relevant specialists. The conduct of abortions outside medical institutions or by persons other than medical professionals was punishable under criminal law. There were approximately 95 reproductive health centres located throughout the country. In addition to providing family planning services, such centres carried out awareness-raising sessions for young people, including during visits to schools. A study of access by women and girls with disabilities to reproductive health services had been carried out in 2021 and, based on the resulting recommendations, materials on reproductive health and related rights had been adapted to better meet their needs, including by making such materials available in sign language and Braille. Much awareness-raising work regarding family planning and reproductive rights was carried out by the Women's Union of Turkmenistan and the Youth Organization of Turkmenistan.

59. **A representative of Turkmenistan** said that progress in artificial intelligence and in efforts to combat cybercrime was key to the fight against trafficking in persons and forced labour. Turkmenistan worked closely with international organizations to that end, and staff of the Office of the Procurator General and other law enforcement agencies participated in seminars on combating those phenomena. In 2023, the Office of the Procurator General and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) had organized events on combating trafficking in persons in which 78 representatives of law enforcement agencies had taken part. In 2024, the Government had supported more than 100 personnel from the Office of the Procurator General in participating in more than 70 refresher training events in the United States, China, Central Asia, the South Caucasus and various European countries. On 13 September 2024, the Government had discussed issues relating to trafficking in persons

with Oliver Stolpe, the UNODC Regional Representative for Afghanistan, Central Asia, Iran and Pakistan. In October 2024, it had discussed the achievements of Turkmenistan in combating trafficking in persons with Cindy Dyer, the Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons of the United States. On 10 March 2025, the Government had held a briefing to present the National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons for the period 2025–2029 with the participation of diplomatic representatives of other States and members of the inter-agency commission for combating trafficking in persons.

60. Turkmenistan had adopted a number of legal instruments under which it was able to fulfil bilateral requests for legal assistance and extradition of suspects in criminal proceedings, including in cases of torture and terrorism. The Government took into account in extradition proceedings all the guarantees required under the European Convention on Extradition and relevant instruments of the United Nations, and it ensured in each case that the person concerned would not be subjected to torture or other violent acts in the country to which he or she was being extradited. It was mandatory to obtain assurances in writing to that effect from the Government in question.

61. **The Chair**, thanking the delegation, said that its dialogue with the Committee had been frank and open and that it had demonstrated its readiness to discuss even the most sensitive issues.

62. **A representative of Turkmenistan** said that the open dialogue that had taken place had made it possible to identify priority areas for improving compliance with the Convention, including the amendment of relevant national laws, the provision of more detailed statistical information and the enhancement of cooperation with the special procedure mandate holders. It was important to the Government not only to comply with the formal requirements of the Convention but also to achieve progress in law enforcement practice. The recommendations made by the Committee would be carefully reviewed by working groups comprising representatives from the parliament, relevant ministries and local authorities.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*