



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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Human Rights Committee

Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Latvia*

1. The Committee considered the fourth periodic report of Latvia¹ at its 4236th and 4237th meetings,² held on 1 and 2 July 2025. At its 4254th meeting, held on 14 July 2025, it adopted the present concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the fourth periodic report of Latvia and the information presented therein. It expresses appreciation for the opportunity to renew its constructive dialogue with the State Party's high-level delegation on the measures taken during the reporting period to implement the provisions of the Covenant. The Committee is grateful to the State Party for its written replies³ to the list of issues,⁴ which were supplemented by the oral responses provided by the delegation, and for the additional information provided in writing.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the adoption or development by the State Party of the following legislative and policy measures:

- (a) The Ombudsman Law amendment designating the Ombudsman as the national preventive mechanism, in 2025;
- (b) The Law on Transparency of Interest Representation, in 2022;
- (c) The law on the discontinuation of the non-citizen status for children, in 2019;
- (d) The Media Policy Guidelines for 2024–2027, and the safety plan for journalists and other media professionals for 2025–2027;
- (e) The first national plan for the prevention and combating of violence against women and domestic violence for 2024–2029;
- (f) The Plan for the Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men 2024–2027;
- (g) The Corruption Prevention and Combating Action Plan 2023–2025;

* Adopted by the Committee at its 144th session (23 June–17 July 2025).

¹ [CCPR/C/LVA/4](#).

² See [CCPR/C/SR.4236](#) and [CCPR/C/SR.4237](#).

³ [CCPR/C/LVA/RQ/4](#).

⁴ [CCPR/C/LVA/Q/4](#).



(h) The Plan for Implementing Measures of the Roma Strategic Framework 2022–2023, renewed for 2024–2027;

(i) The Human Trafficking Prevention Plan for 2021–2023.

4. The Committee also welcomes the accession by the State Party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, in 2021.

C. Principal matters of concern and recommendations

Constitutional and legal framework within which the Covenant is implemented

5. While the Committee takes note that national courts have invoked the provisions of the Covenant in numerous cases, and that the Academy of Justice, established in 2024, conducts training for judges, prosecutors and investigators on human rights issues, it is concerned about the lack of institutional mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve full implementation of the Committee's recommendations and its Views in individual communications (art. 2).

6. **The State Party should continue to strive towards full implementation of the recommendations contained in the Committee's concluding observations and Views. It should consider strengthening legislation to enable the authors of communications to whom the Committee has granted measures of reparation to seek enforcement of such measures before national courts.**

National human rights institution

7. The Committee welcomes the re-accreditation with A status of the Office of the Ombudsman. While the Committee takes note of the efforts made to strengthen the institution, including through legislative amendments to the Ombudsman Law, it is concerned that certain recommendations made by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, for example regarding the need to strengthen the functional immunity of the Ombudsman, have not been addressed. The Committee notes with concern that although the State Party has designated the Office of the Ombudsman as the national preventive mechanism, it has not established a structurally independent unit within the institution equipped with its own staff and budget (art. 2).

8. **The State Party should continue to ensure that the Office of the Ombudsman complies fully with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) and is able to carry out its mandates effectively and independently. The State Party should also:**

(a) **Promptly implement the recommendations of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, including by providing functional immunity for the Ombudsman, establishing limits on the Ombudsman's terms of office, and providing for an independent and objective dismissal process;**

(b) **Ensure that the national preventive mechanism operates independently and is provided with its own financial and human resources.**

Anti-corruption measures

9. Acknowledging the measures adopted to combat corruption, including the large number of corruption investigations and the development of the Corruption Prevention and Combating Action Plan 2023–2025, the Committee is nevertheless concerned by reports that corruption persists, especially in the public sector. The Committee is further concerned about the significant overlap among the mandates of existing anti-corruption bodies in the State Party, and that the launch of the interest representation register and declaration systems under the Law of Transparency of Interest Representation (the law on lobbying) has been postponed from 2025 to 2028 (arts. 2 and 25).

10. **The State Party should increase its efforts to prevent and eradicate corruption at all levels, including in government and in the judiciary. It should redouble its efforts to investigate all allegations of corruption promptly, thoroughly, independently and impartially and ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offence and that victims are provided with adequate reparation. The State Party should also:**

(a) **Continue the consolidation of the anti-corruption activities in the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau to avoid duplication in and fragmentation of the national anti-corruption framework;**

(b) **Expedite the operationalization of the interest representation register and declaration systems.**

Non-discrimination

11. The Committee is concerned about reports of discrimination against members of the Roma community, who continue to experience discrimination in employment and unequal access to education, healthcare and housing, and are at a greater risk of poverty and social exclusion. While the Committee acknowledges the State Party's efforts to support the Roma population, including through cultural initiatives and the appointment of mediators, these initiatives lack sufficient long-term resources (arts. 2 and 26).

12. **The State Party should reinforce its efforts to address discrimination against Roma, and ensure equal access to education, healthcare and housing, and allocate sufficient resources to poverty reduction strategies targeting the Roma community. It should also adopt measures to effectively prevent acts of discrimination by public and private actors, and intensify efforts to address stereotypes, prejudice, intolerance and systemic discrimination against Roma and ensure that all complaints of discrimination are investigated, perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with appropriate sanctions and that victims have access to full reparation.**

Hate crimes and hate speech

13. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State Party to combat hate crimes and hate speech, including the establishment of a specialized unit to investigate hate crimes, the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns, the provision of training for law enforcement officials, prosecutors and judges on the effective investigation and prosecution of hate crimes, and amendments to the Criminal Law expanding the list of aggravating circumstances to include motivation based on "social hatred". However, the Committee is concerned by reports of increases in the number of incidents of hate speech, including from members of the parliament, low rates of criminal proceedings for hate crime and hate speech, and underreporting of racially motivated crimes (arts. 2, 3, 19, 22 and 26).

14. **The State Party should strengthen its efforts to combat hate speech and hate crime. In particular, it should:**

(a) **Ensure that all acts of hate speech and hate crimes are promptly and effectively investigated, that perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with appropriate sanctions and that victims are provided with full reparations;**

(b) **Strengthen the national capacity to eradicate hate speech and hate crime, including by providing adequate training to law enforcement officials, judges and prosecutors, allocating the necessary resources to entities to effectively address hate crime, and enhancing the collection of data on hate crime;**

(c) **Take effective measures to publicly condemn and punish hate speech, in particular hate speech by politicians and high-level officials;**

(d) **Raise public awareness of the prohibition of hate speech and hate crime and of channels to report such crimes, and take all measures necessary to promote and facilitate such reporting.**

States of emergency

15. The Committee is concerned that the restrictions imposed pursuant to the state of emergency at the border with Belarus between 2021 and 2023, which reports suggest were disproportionate and may have resulted in a de facto derogation, may not have been in compliance with the requirements of the Covenant (art. 4).

16. In the light of the Committee's general comment No. 29 (2001) on derogations from provisions of the Covenant during a state of emergency, the State Party should comply fully with all the conditions set forth in article 4 of the Covenant. The State Party should also guarantee that any measures that restrict human rights during a state of emergency are exceptional, temporary, strictly necessary, proportionate, non-discriminatory and subject to independent judicial review.

Gender equality

17. While the Committee welcomes the ongoing efforts by the State Party to promote gender equality, the Committee is concerned about the persistent gender pay gap (arts. 3 and 26).

18. The State Party should strengthen its efforts to guarantee gender equality in all spheres of life. In particular, it should:

(a) **Redouble its efforts to reduce the gender pay gap, ensuring the effective implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;**

(b) **Continue to address discriminatory attitudes and gender stereotypes in society.**

Violence against women

19. The Committee welcomes the measures adopted by the State Party to prevent and combat violence against women, including reforms to the criminal legislation and procedures, and the development of the first national plan for the prevention and combating of violence against women and domestic violence for 2024–2029. However, the Committee is concerned that neither domestic violence nor intimate partner violence is recognized as a free standing criminal offence, which hinders effective data collection, monitoring and response mechanisms (arts. 2, 3, 6, 7 and 26).

20. The State Party should redouble its efforts to eradicate violence against women and girls. In particular, it should:

(a) **Strengthen the legal framework for the protection of women against all forms of gender-based violence, including domestic and intimate partner violence, as a free-standing criminal offence;**

(b) **Improve the collection of data on gender-related killings, or femicide, to enable better insight into motives and typology;**

(c) **Combat societal attitudes that drive gender stereotypes, through public education programmes and community interventions to raise awareness of gender-based violence as a crime and to combat stereotypes that normalize violence against women.**

21. The Committee is concerned by the high rates of femicide and domestic and intimate partner violence, and by the underreporting of gender-based violence and insufficient support services for victims, including the absence of specialized centres for victims of rape or other sexual violence (arts. 2, 3, 6, 7 and 26).

22. The State Party should:

(a) **Establish effective mechanisms and take all measures necessary to facilitate and encourage reporting on gender-based violence, including by providing all women and girls with access to information about their rights, protection measures and remedies, and avoid the social stigmatization and revictimization of any person who seeks help;**

(b) **Ensure that all cases of violence against women and girls are thoroughly and promptly investigated, and that perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offence;**

(c) **Ensure that victims receive effective remedies and measures of protection and assistance, including access to specialized reception centres and shelters throughout the country, and raise awareness about the existence of those remedies and measures;**

(d) **Bolster investigative and judicial capacity by training judges, prosecutors, law enforcement authorities and health personnel to respond to allegations of gender-based violence effectively and in a gender-sensitive manner, and increase the number of women prosecutors and police officers.**

Right to life

23. The Committee is concerned about the high number of deaths in custody relative to the prison population, in part due to poor living conditions. It regrets the lack of information about the outcomes of the criminal proceedings initiated as a result of some of those deaths. The Committee is also concerned about reports of a widespread self-governing hierarchy within the prison system, according to which some prisoners exploit or abuse other vulnerable prisoners (arts. 2, 6 and 26).

24. **The State Party should ensure that conditions of detention comply fully with relevant international human rights standards, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules). It should, in particular:**

(a) **Increase its efforts to prevent deaths and suicides in prisons and to guarantee the right to life of all people in custody, in particular by strengthening healthcare services, supporting mental healthcare and imposing limits on solitary confinement;**

(b) **Conduct prompt, effective and independent investigations of all deaths of prisoners;**

(c) **Facilitate independent, effective and regular monitoring of all places of detention without prior notice and on an unsupervised basis, and provide mandatory training for law enforcement officers, judges, prosecutors and other legal professionals regarding the prevention of deaths in custody;**

(d) **Dismantle prison self-governance hierarchies that enable exploitation or abuse of vulnerable prisoners, including by creating a system for categorizing individuals deprived of liberty on the basis of their individualized risk level, and continue efforts to fully implement a rehabilitation-based approach in prisons.**

Prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and treatment of persons deprived of their liberty

25. While acknowledging the efforts by the State Party to categorize torture as a separate criminal offence, the Committee is concerned that the definition in national legislation is still not fully aligned with the provisions of the Covenant and other international standards, and that the penalties for torture are not commensurate with the gravity of the offence. The Committee expresses concern at allegations of intimidation and abuse of authority by prison staff and excessive use of force by police officers during arrests, including beatings allegedly inflicted to extract confessions (arts. 2, 7, 9, 10 and 14).

26. **The State Party should take all measures necessary to prevent and eradicate torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In particular, it should:**

(a) **Revise its legislation to ensure that it contains a definition of torture that is fully compliant with article 7 of the Covenant and article 1 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and that penalties in the Criminal Law are commensurate with the gravity of the crime;**

(b) **Conduct thorough, independent and impartial investigations into all allegations of ill-treatment in custody and all allegations of excessive use of force by law enforcement officers in accordance with the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol), prosecute perpetrators, including law enforcement officials, and, if they are convicted, punish them with sanctions commensurate with the gravity of the crime, and provide victims with full remedy and redress, including rehabilitation;**

(c) **Reinforce oversight mechanisms to prevent and punish the excessive use of force by law enforcement officials;**

(d) **Increase the training provided to judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials and forensic medicine and health personnel, including training on international human rights standards, such as the Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information-Gathering (the Méndez Principles);**

(e) **Ensure that all persons deprived of their liberty have access to an independent, secure and effective complaint mechanism to investigate allegations of torture and ill-treatment and guarantee the protection of persons who file complaints.**

Conditions in psychiatric institutions

27. While the Committee welcomes the measures taken to promote community-based mental healthcare and social care, it is concerned about allegations of mistreatment, including cold showers and beatings by staff, in some psychiatric institutions, as well as reports of limits on access to the outdoors and to outdoor activities. The Committee is also concerned by reports that some adolescent patients are placed in adult hospitals or wards, and that certain facilities face a critical shortage of mental health professionals, in particular psychiatrists (arts. 2, 7, 9 and 10).

28. **The State Party should ensure that the treatment of persons in psychiatric institutions fully conforms with the Covenant. In particular, the State Party should:**

(a) **Establish an effective and independent monitoring and reporting system for mental and social care institutions, aimed at effectively investigating and sanctioning abuses and providing redress to victims and their families;**

(b) **Improve living conditions, including by ensuring access to the outdoors and to outdoor activities;**

(c) **Ensure that minors are not placed in adult hospitals or wards, to protect them from violence, abuse and harm;**

(d) **Strengthen the capacity of psychiatric institutions by increasing the number of specialists and staff, especially psychiatrists, to address the low doctor-to-patient ratio in some institutions, and ensure multidisciplinary approaches to treatment in order to preserve the dignity and well-being of patients.**

Liberty and security of person

29. The Committee regrets the absence of updated disaggregated data on the number of persons deprived of their liberty and the duration of their detention. The Committee is concerned by reports indicating that detainees are not systematically informed of their rights upon arrival at police stations, nor provided with ex officio legal representation from the outset of the deprivation of their liberty. The Committee is also concerned by the absence of alternatives to detention and reports of poor detention conditions, including inadequate ventilation, natural light, hygiene and nutrition (arts. 9, 10 and 14).

30. **The State Party should ensure that all legal safeguards are guaranteed in practice to all detained persons in line with the Committee's general comment No. 35 (2014) on liberty and security of person, including the right of detainees to be assisted by a lawyer from the outset of the deprivation of liberty. In particular it should:**

(a) **Increase the availability of, and recourse to, alternatives to pretrial detention in line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules) and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), including by ensuring effective access to bail;**

(b) **Take all measures necessary to ensure that pretrial detention is reviewed in a prompt, thorough and impartial manner by the relevant judicial authorities, including through the effective implementation of the right to habeas corpus;**

(c) **Increase its efforts to improve the conditions of detention and ensure access to adequate ventilation, nutritious food, clean water and healthcare for all persons deprived of their liberty.**

Access to justice, independence of the judiciary and fair trial

31. The Committee welcomes efforts to improve the administration of justice and notes that judicial independence in the State Party is generally respected. However, it is concerned about reports of politicization and corruption within the judiciary, and about the risk of political influence in the process of appointment to the Supreme Court (arts. 2 and 14).

32. **The State Party should take all measures necessary, in law and in practice, to safeguard the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, and guarantee that judges and their staff can operate without any pressure or interference from the legislative and executive branches. In this regard, it should ensure that the procedures for the selection, appointment, promotion and removal of judges, including the appointment of Supreme Court judges, are transparent and impartial and comply with the Covenant and international standards such as the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary.**

Treatment of aliens, including migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers

33. The Committee is deeply concerned about: reports of serious human rights violations allegedly committed at the border with Belarus during the state of emergency between 2021 and 2023, including summary forced returns and pushbacks; allegations of ill-treatment, such as beatings and use of electric shocks, allegedly perpetrated by border guards, military personnel and police officers; the lack of provision of basic amenities, such as water and food, to asylum-seekers in detention; and the failure to ensure effective access to asylum procedures. While the Committee notes the training carried out by the State Party for border control personnel on international protection for migrants, it is concerned by reports that border guards do not effectively identify and assess persons with international protection needs. The Committee is also concerned that, although asylum-seekers have the right to request judicial review of extensions of their detention, free legal aid is not available for such proceedings, thereby impeding the effective exercise of that right (arts. 7, 9, 12 and 13).

34. **The State Party should ensure that all persons in need of international protection have unfettered access to the national territory and to fair and efficient procedures for the individualized determination of refugee status or eligibility for asylum, and should ensure respect for the principle of non-refoulement at all times, including during states of emergency. It should also:**

(a) **Ensure that all allegations of pushbacks, ill-treatment at borders and other human rights violations are promptly, thoroughly and independently investigated and that the perpetrators, if found guilty, are punished with sanctions commensurate with the seriousness of the offence and that victims receive full reparation;**

(b) **Provide adequate training for border control personnel and other relevant officials on international protection of refugees and asylum-seekers, including on the principle of non-refoulement, and on the identification and referral of persons with specific vulnerabilities and protection needs;**

(c) **Ensure the independent monitoring of border management and immigration detention facilities;**

(d) **Ensure that detention is imposed on asylum-seekers only as a measure of last resort, for the shortest possible period, and that legal aid is available to asylum-seekers in detention and during all stages of the asylum application procedure.**

Statelessness and deprivation of citizenship

35. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Law on the Termination of the Granting of the Status of Non-Citizen for Children, which provides for the automatic conferral of Latvian citizenship to children born to non-citizen parents, unless another nationality is acquired. However, since the Law applies only to children born after 1 January 2020, 1,580 children born before that date remain non-citizens as of 2025. While the Committee welcomes the overall reduction in the number of non-citizens, it notes with concern that the naturalization rate continues to be low relative to the total non-citizen population in the State Party, and that the failure to meet Latvian language proficiency requirements may result in the termination of the permanent residence status of nationals of the Russian Federation (arts. 2, 3, 17, 24 and 26).

36. **The State Party should:**

(a) **Modify the legal framework on citizenship to provide adequate and effective safeguards against statelessness, including by amending the law on the discontinuation of the non-citizen status for children;**

(b) **Increase outreach and awareness-raising campaigns on how to acquire citizenship in the State Party;**

(c) **Ensure that Latvian language proficiency requirements do not constitute, in practice, disproportionate barriers to retaining permanent residence in the State Party.**

Freedom of conscience and religious belief

37. The Committee appreciates the measures adopted by the State Party to safeguard the rights of conscientious objectors following the re-introduction of compulsory military service for men under the Law on the National Defence Service. The Committee also notes that the term of alternative civil service is equal in length to military service. However, the Committee is concerned that with alternative service arrangements being administered by the Ministry of Defence, and with the Conscription Control Commission being both constituted by and reporting to the Ministry, there are risks of compromising the independence and impartiality of the decision-making process; and that the rules governing discharges from military service discriminate against conscientious objectors (arts. 2, 18 and 26).

38. **The State Party should take all measures necessary to ensure that the right to conscientious objection to military service is guaranteed in law and in practice, and that alternative service is accessible to all conscientious objectors, without discrimination. In particular, it should:**

(a) **Ensure the independence and impartiality of the procedures for assessing applications for conscientious objector status, including by placing such procedures under the full control of civilian authorities entirely separate from the Ministry of Defence;**

(b) **Consider revising the legislative framework to provide for honourable discharges on grounds of conscience, and to ensure that individuals who receive early termination from military service on those grounds do not face financial or other penalties.**

Trafficking in persons

39. The Committee takes note with concern that the State Party has become a country of destination of trafficking in persons for labour, begging and sexual exploitation. The Committee regrets that a centralized national referral mechanism for combating trafficking in persons has not yet been established, which hinders effective stakeholder coordination and provision of assistance to potential and actual victims of trafficking. It is concerned by reports

that relevant domestic institutions lack the capacity to identify victims of trafficking, that public awareness of trafficking remains low and that trafficking cases are significantly underreported. The Committee expresses its concern at reports that children in State-run social care institutions, including orphanages, are especially vulnerable to trafficking for sham marriages and sexual exploitation (arts. 2, 7, 8 and 26).

40. The State Party should further strengthen its efforts to effectively prevent, combat and punish trafficking in persons. It should, in particular:

(a) Accelerate the establishment of a national referral mechanism for combating trafficking in persons;

(b) Enhance prevention measures and awareness-raising campaigns on trafficking in persons for the general public, as well as specialized training for all State officials, including the judiciary, prosecutors and law enforcement and border authorities, on standards and procedures for the prevention of trafficking and the identification and referral of victims of trafficking, including migrants, asylum-seekers and children in social care institutions.

41. The Committee is concerned by information indicating that the conviction rate for trafficking in persons is very low, that remedies for victims are inadequate and require complex administrative processes to access, and that victims of trafficking are in some cases prosecuted for crimes they were forced to commit as a result of being trafficked. While acknowledging the steps taken to improve assistance for victims of trafficking, the Committee is concerned about reports of insufficient coverage of services and the lack of specialized protection and support, including access to safe accommodation and specialized shelters. The Committee is further concerned about reports that some judges, prosecutors and police lack sufficient understanding of the various forms of trafficking and the proper application of anti-trafficking legislation (arts. 7, 8 and 24).

42. The State Party should:

(a) Ensure that all cases of trafficking in persons are promptly, thoroughly, effectively and impartially investigated, that perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offence, and that victims receive full reparation, including compensation;

(b) Modify the legal framework to ensure that victims are not prosecuted or punished for crimes that they were forced to commit as a result of being trafficked;

(c) Provide victims with adequate protection and assistance, such as safe and specialized shelters, access to healthcare and legal protection, and facilitate access to effective remedies and rehabilitation and reintegration support services;

(d) Continue efforts to strengthen the capacity of judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials and border authorities to investigate trafficking in persons;

(e) Ensure that sufficient financial, technical and human resources are allocated to all institutions responsible for preventing, investigating and punishing trafficking in persons, as well as to those providing protection and assistance, including civil society organizations.

Freedom of expression

43. The Committee is concerned about legislative and policy changes, such as amendments to the Electronic Mass Media Law, in 2022, and to the National Security Concept, in 2023, which reportedly limit non-Latvian language content in public media. The Committee is further concerned that as of 1 January 2026, public media will be restricted to Latvian and languages belonging to the European cultural space, which in practice may exclude the Belarusian, Russian and Ukrainian languages. The Committee has also received reports of inadequate responses to a worrying increase in online harassment and intimidation of journalists, such as the 2012 assault on journalist Leonīds Jākobsons, whose case was closed due to the inability to identify the perpetrators (art. 19).

44. **The State Party should take all measures necessary to guarantee that everyone can exercise the right to freedom of expression, in accordance with article 19 of the Covenant and the Committee's general comment No. 34 (2011) on the freedoms of opinion and expression. In particular, the State Party should:**

(a) **Reconsider the restrictions introduced into the Electronic Mass Media Law and the National Security Concept;**

(b) **Expand efforts to increase the public availability of information and programming, in the media and online, in non-Latvian languages.**

(c) **Prevent and combat all acts of harassment and intimidation against journalists and guarantee the effective protection of journalists, ensure that all allegations of harassment and intimidation are investigated, that perpetrators are brought to justice and appropriately punished and that victims receive appropriate reparations.**

Participation in public affairs

45. The Committee is concerned about the underrepresentation of women in political life, including at the local level, and by the fact that most political parties have not adopted targeted measures to promote the participation of women in electoral processes. The Committee notes that some polling stations are reportedly not accessible to persons with disabilities. The State Party further informed the Committee that pursuant to the Constitution, only citizens can participate in elections at any level in Latvia, and that acquiring citizenship is the sole mechanism for affording individuals the right to vote.

46. **In accordance with article 25 of the Covenant and the Committee's general comment No. 25 (1996) on participation in public affairs and the right to vote, the State Party should ensure the full enjoyment of the right to participate in public affairs, including by women and persons with disabilities. It should also take measures to promote participation in public affairs by long-term residents who are not citizens, including by considering the possibility of allowing them to take part in municipal elections.**

Minorities

47. The Committee notes the amendments to the State Party's education legislation aimed at transitioning all instruction in public schools to the Latvian language. The Committee is concerned that these measures may lead to indirect discrimination against linguistic minorities. While the Committee notes that linguistic minority pupils at the preschool and primary education levels have a right to request education programmes to learn their language and cultural history, it regrets the lack of information on the number and operation of these programmes. The Committee also notes that paid pre-election materials are required to be in the Latvian language, which may restrict the ability of minority language speakers to fully engage in the electoral process (art. 27).

48. **The State Party should ensure that language policies and practices do not result in indirect discrimination against linguistic minorities but rather promote social inclusion. It should monitor the effects on such minorities of the transition to Latvian as the language of instruction and raise awareness about education programmes in minority languages and facilitate their use. It should also continue to promote the participation of minorities in electoral processes.**

D. Dissemination and follow-up

49. **The State Party should widely disseminate the Covenant, the two Optional Protocols thereto, its fourth periodic report and the present concluding observations, with a view to raising awareness of the rights enshrined in the Covenant among the judicial, legislative and administrative authorities, civil society and non-governmental organizations operating in the country and the general public. The State Party should**

ensure that the periodic report and the present concluding observations are translated into the official language of the State Party.

50. In accordance with rule 75 (1) of the Committee's rules of procedure, the State Party is requested to provide, by 18 July 2028, information on the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee in paragraphs 22 (violence against women), 26 (prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and treatment of persons deprived of their liberty) and 34 (treatment of aliens, including migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers) above.

51. In line with the Committee's predictable review cycle, the State Party will receive in 2031 the Committee's list of issues prior to submission of the report and will be expected to submit within one year its replies, which will constitute its fifth periodic report. The Committee requests the State Party, in preparing the report, to broadly consult civil society and non-governmental organizations operating in the country. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/268, the word limit for the report is 21,200 words. The next constructive dialogue with the State Party will take place in Geneva in 2033.
