



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

Distr.: General
3 August 2016

Original: English

Committee against Torture
Fifty-eighth session

Summary record of the 1439th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 28 July 2016, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Modvig

Contents

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

Second periodic report of Honduras (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of the present document* to the English Translation Section, room E.6040, Palais des Nations, Geneva (trad_sec_eng@unog.ch).

Any corrections to the records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

GE.16-13273 (E) 020816 030816



* 1 6 1 3 2 7 3 *

Please recycle A small recycling symbol consisting of three chasing arrows forming a triangle.



The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

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

Second periodic report of Honduras (continued) (CAT/C/HND/2; CAT/C/HND/Q/2)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Honduras took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Velázquez** (Honduras) said that his Government had made considerable strides in reforming the police, including the dismissal or resignation of a number of senior officials and the appointment of new ones. Nearly 460 such officials had undergone a review in order to ensure that they had not been in conflict with the law, which had resulted in the removal of more than 40 per cent of them from the force. The ranks of the police force — from that of director general down to cadet — differed from those of the military.
3. Some 560 private security companies, which employed more than 34,000 security guards, currently operated in Honduras, and others that had applied for licences to operate would increase the number of companies to nearly 600. There was a bill before the National Congress aimed at regulating the operations of those companies. Draft legislation on the National Police, also currently being discussed by the legislature, contained a regulatory framework for such companies, which was lacking under the current Organic Act on the National Police. It should be pointed out that private security companies provided human rights training for their personnel.
4. His Government had been working with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which had helped it to draft legislation aimed at ensuring that the police and other law enforcement agencies defended human rights and complied with international standards on the use of force and firearms. Under the law, police officers would be required to wear uniforms so that they could be clearly identified when on duty. Regulations had also been introduced on the use of masks, or so-called balaclavas. However, some special forces undertook very dangerous operations that called for such headgear.
5. Extensive formal training in human rights was provided at the National Police Academy and National Police University, which covered the prevention of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The National Committee for the Prevention of Torture had organized a number of seminars for high-level law enforcement officials in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, which had had a multiplier effect within police institutions.
6. A question had been raised concerning the constitutionality of the police intelligence unit and special response teams known as TIGRES (Tropa de Inteligencia y Grupos de Respuesta Especial de Seguridad) — which composed some 200 members stationed in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula — because of the supporting role that the armed forces played in their operations. However, under the Constitution, the armed forces were authorized to cooperate with the police in order to maintain law and order. Lastly, he wished to make clear that the police force was not subordinate to the armed forces.
7. **Mr. Sabillón Canales** (Honduras) said that the Government had involved the armed forces in public security operations as part of its efforts to end the violence in the country. It had also deployed the public order military police (Policía Militar del Orden Público), a special police unit of the armed forces set up under Legislative Decree No. 168-2013, in order to maintain the peace. Several steps had been taken to prevent members of the armed forces from committing human rights violations when they carried out police operations, including improving the selection and recruitment process and providing armed forces personnel with further training on human rights and the use of force throughout their careers. Cases of human rights violations, including torture, were dealt with by the ordinary

courts. He wished to point out that, as the current Military Criminal Code dated back to 1906, torture had not been specified as a criminal offence as such. However, under a new draft of the Code, torture was a specific criminal offence.

8. **Mr. Padilla Cerna** (Honduras) said that, in 2015 and 2016, human rights training had been provided to 16,000 members of the armed forces. To date, in 2016, more than 6,000 members had been trained. Human rights, humanitarian law and the use of force formed part of the curriculum at all levels of education for the armed forces. Persons wishing to enlist in the armed forces were subject to a thorough selection process, including psychological and medical examinations, and were carefully vetted to ensure that they had not been in conflict with the law. Military service was voluntary in Honduras. Recruits to the public order military police were required to have served for at least one year in the armed forces and to have a good record of military service. They, too, underwent extensive screening and received thorough training in human rights and the use of force.

9. The United Nations Development Programme and ICRC had provided Honduras with considerable support for the provision and certification of such training. To date, some 1,600 members of the public order military police, out of a total of 3,000, had received human rights training. Of the 500,000 or so missions carried out by the military police thus far, less than 1 per cent had given rise to reports of offences being committed. Furthermore, all military police personnel accused of committing offences had been prosecuted; no one had gone unpunished. Lastly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had established a strict policy that allowed zero tolerance of human rights violations and improper use of force by the military.

10. **Mr. Suazo Barahona** (Honduras) said that the National Prison Institute was a recently established body set up to bring prison conditions up to the appropriate standards. Between 2015 and 2016, the budget for the Institute had increased by almost 50 per cent, and its annual budget now stood at 729 million lempiras. A unit for the protection of human rights had been in place in the Institute since January 2015; it carried out daily visits to prisons and other places of detention throughout the country and inspected conditions of detention and the treatment of persons deprived of liberty. It also made recommendations to the authorities.

11. He wished to draw attention to some improvements that had been made in the prison system, including steps towards reducing prison overcrowding and ensuring the separation of different categories of prisoners. The State was building new prisons in accordance with the recommendations put forward in the report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on the human rights of persons deprived of liberty in the Americas (document No. 64 of 2011). Under a three-month project launched in October 2015, 935 inmates had been identified as eligible for early release, parole or community work as alternatives to custodial penalties, with a view to easing prison overcrowding. The project had resulted in the establishment of interdisciplinary boards to examine such alternatives. Efforts were also under way to streamline the justice system in order to speed up criminal proceedings and clear the current backlog of cases, which would help reduce the number of persons in pretrial detention. Congress was also currently exploring the possibility of alternatives to prison sentences. For example, it had reviewed the 21 offences for which custodial penalties were required by law.

12. Nutrition was another area that had shown improvement. The amount allocated for food for each inmate per day had increased by a factor of three between 2009 and 2014, which meant that places of detention were able to provide prisoners with a balanced, healthy diet. There had been an increase in the recreational and cultural activities provided in the existing and new prisons, including access to libraries. A range of educational and paid employment programmes were also available to persons deprived of liberty on a voluntary basis, and every effort was made to ensure that they were able to reintegrate into society.

13. Replying to specific questions raised at the previous meeting, he said that the National Prison Institute had 15 doctors and 33 nurses who worked on a full-time basis in places of detention. However, in prisons without permanent medical personnel, the Ministry of Health provided them with the necessary medical services two to three times a week. There were also interdisciplinary boards made up of doctors, psychiatrists, lawyers, social workers and others in many of the detention centres.

14. Although the separation of categories of prisoners remained a challenge, his Government hoped to be able to separate those remanded in custody from convicted prisoners in the near future. Among the new prisons being built was one in the Department of Santa Bárbara, where prison overcrowding was an acute problem. The new facility had a capacity of about 1,480 prisoners, and it was expected that the entire prison population in Santa Bárbara would be transferred there in October 2016 and the old facility would be closed down.

15. As the National Prison Institute had lacked the necessary human resources when it had begun its work, it had had to call upon the help of the armed forces. However, it was moving towards an effective prison service that would ensure that not all persons making their careers in the service came from the armed forces. The Institute was working closely with the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights and would do everything possible to support it. The budget of the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture was increasing every year, and considerable efforts were being made to provide it with the resources necessary to fulfil its responsibilities.

16. **Ms. Salas Montes** (Honduras) said that there were about 1.3 million children in Honduras between 12 and 18 years of age and it was estimated that as many as 60,000 of them were involved in gangs. Ninety per cent of minors in conflict with the law identified themselves as gang members. The State was working in cooperation with NGOs and international organizations to establish a juvenile justice system that offered alternatives to custodial sentences and followed an integrated approach.

17. Of the 657 minors in conflict with the law in Honduras, 244 were under the supervision of the Directorate for Children, Adolescents and Families and had been given various alternative sanctions. The majority of those sanctions were for a duration of between 2 and 12 months. Custodial sentences for minors were kept as short as possible and must never exceed 8 years. Consideration was given to their age and to the effectiveness of their rehabilitation, which was evaluated every six months. Of the minors currently serving custodial sentences, 74 per cent were over 17 years of age. A specialized unit comprising seven lawyers was responsible for providing appropriate legal assistance to minors in residential learning centres, inter alia by accompanying them when they appeared before the courts and by encouraging the use of alternative measures.

18. In March 2015, a state of emergency had been declared in the country's juvenile detention centres in order to, inter alia, re-establish effective management of the centres and implement a differentiated security strategy. As a result, a team of six doctors and six nurses had been established to provide medical, dental and psychological care to minors in detention and refer them to hospitals when necessary. A total of 121 minors in detention were enrolled in an education programme run by the NGO Alfasic de Honduras. Also with the support of civil society organizations, a series of workshops had been held to provide the detained minors with useful skills and encourage their integration into the labour market. The amount of State funds invested in providing care for minors in detention had been increased to approximately US\$ 845 per month per child.

19. The establishment of a prevention and security directorate had made it possible to implement a differentiated security strategy. The staff of the residential learning centres included 130 specialized guards who were civilians and had received training in, inter alia,

human rights, crowd control and investigative techniques. The guards worked in conjunction with law enforcement officials to ensure public safety around the perimeter of the learning centres.

20. Minors were placed in the detention facilities of the Special Operations Commando (COBRA) only as a temporary, emergency measure to ensure their physical safety. The number of minors in such facilities had decreased by 11 per cent since August 2015. The COBRA facilities were strictly for minors, most of whom were near the age of majority. They received continuous medical and psychological care and legal assistance, and an interdisciplinary board dealt with visiting hours, disciplinary measures and other activities in the facilities.

21. The Government had allocated resources to improve living conditions in the Renaciendo learning centre, with a view to separating the detainees according to their level of risk and vulnerability. In that way, it hoped to resolve the situation of the minors currently being detained in the COBRA facilities. An electronic registration system was being implemented and would be linked with the data held by the Forensic Medicine Department to determine the age of detainees and ensure that minors were separated from adults.

22. Article 1 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code defined a child as any person under 18 years of age. The “Vida Mejor” (Better Life) programme provided conditional cash transfers to households experiencing extreme poverty, so as to protect children in vulnerable situations and ensure their access to health, education and nutrition. Many vulnerable children were fed through a school meals programme and received school supplies and uniforms free of charge. The Government had invested US\$ 1.2 million to support local authorities and civil society organizations in their efforts to provide care for vulnerable children and adolescents.

23. **Ms. Madrid Paz** (Honduras) said that femicide had been criminalized in Honduras in 2013. National law set out a rather narrow definition of femicide, and any acts that did not fit that definition were tried as acts of homicide or murder. Femicide carried a penalty of 20 to 30 years’ imprisonment, which was one of the heaviest penalties in Honduran law. The Criminal Code explicitly stated that the Code must be implemented from a gender perspective.

24. Efforts were being made to encourage women victims of violence to file complaints and to prevent their revictimization. Facilities were in place so that women victims of sexual violence could give testimony in private and that testimony could be recorded and used as evidence without them having to appear in court. A team of psychologists, social workers and other professionals provided comprehensive care to victims. The National Women’s Institute and the Public Prosecution Service had jointly established a unit to investigate violent deaths of women.

25. Local committees to prevent violence against women had been established in 10 municipalities to raise awareness of the problem and to provide income-generating activities and capacity-building for women victims. Women could report violent crime through a 911 hotline manned by specialized staff. Funding in the amount of US\$ 25 million had been allocated to establish the Women’s City Programme, which was intended to improve women’s living conditions, inter alia by encouraging women’s financial autonomy and preventing domestic violence. A gender focus was being incorporated into the human rights training provided to judicial officials. The National Institute for Women was working in conjunction with the Ministry of Health to establish a protocol for the care of women victims of sexual violence.

26. Under new legislation, specific offices would be established to deal with women’s issues and children’s issues, but municipalities that had already established their own

Municipal Women's Offices could continue to operate them. Currently, 70 per cent of the Municipal Women's Offices remained in operation. The National Institute for Women worked in close collaboration with those offices and planned to propose an amendment to the Municipalities Act setting out the functions of the offices.

27. **Ms. Aguilar** (Honduras) said that, in 2014 and 2015, much work had been done to restructure the prison system and to provide prison staff and other public officials with training on human rights and non-discrimination. A human rights protection unit had been established within the National Prison Institute in 2015 and was responsible for following up on any complaints of human rights violations in detention.

28. An agreement had been reached among various organizations on follow-up to the recommendations made during the second universal periodic review of Honduras with respect to, inter alia, hate crimes motivated by the victim's sexual orientation. The Public Prosecution Service was not aware of any current reports of abuse of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons in prison. Disciplinary procedures in prisons had been reviewed to ensure that they complied with the principle of non-discrimination.

29. A total of 72 million lempiras had been allocated as compensation for the relatives of victims of the Comayagua prison fire. Of that amount, 52 million had already been disbursed, and the remainder would be disbursed in March 2017. The families would be included as beneficiaries in the Vida Mejor programme. In addition, 360 housing units would be built for the families. Legal proceedings had been initiated against the governor of the prison and other staff members for criminal negligence, and the hearing was scheduled for 17 January 2017.

30. Regarding the *López Lone and others v. Honduras* case before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the State of Honduras had submitted an appeal for reversal of the verdict on 4 February 2016 and was awaiting the court's response. As for the *López Álvarez v. Honduras* case, in March 2016 the State of Honduras had submitted information to the court regarding the progress made in the investigations into the matter and was again awaiting the court's response. The prison registers from the period of Mr. López Álvarez's detention had been reviewed, and no record had been found of any complaints submitted by him claiming that he had not been allowed to communicate in his native language.

31. With regard to the murder of Berta Cáceres, a human rights defender, five suspects had been arrested and were currently in pretrial detention. Investigations were being conducted so that the criminal proceedings could move forward. A bill on protection for human rights defenders had been submitted to Congress in 2014 and adopted as law in May 2015. On 15 August 2015, a number of human rights organizations had called for the adoption of the implementing regulations to enable enforcement of the law to be postponed so as to allow further deliberation.

32. As at June 2016, a total of 38 requests for protection had been received and were being handled by the Human Rights Directorate of the Ministry of Security. A budget of US\$ 870 million had been allocated for implementation of the law in 2016. Of the recommendations made during the universal periodic review of Honduras, two specifically related to implementation of the Convention. Also, 8 of the 200 actions provided for in the National Human Rights Action Plan specifically related to the Convention.

33. **Ms. Ponce** (Honduras) said that many countries in Latin America had faced difficulties in investigating historic cases of enforced disappearance. In Honduras, enforced disappearance had not been included as a specific crime in the Criminal Code, which had made it necessary for investigators to open murder cases instead. Although human rights organizations had initially led efforts to investigate such cases, the Public Prosecution Service had also been involved in that process since its establishment in 1994. The identification of victims had presented a further difficulty in the absence of a DNA bank.

Honduras was nevertheless fully committed to thoroughly investigating historic cases of enforced disappearance, as had been demonstrated by its ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the incorporation of the crime of enforced disappearance into the Criminal Code. Experts from Argentina had recently provided technical guidance on the processing of DNA evidence in such cases.

34. The response of the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights to allegations of human rights violations connected with the events beginning on 28 June 2009 had been evaluated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and an alternative truth commission. The circumstances of the period of the *de facto* Government had made it difficult for progress to be made in processing cases of human rights violations. It was clear that there had been a series of violations committed against women, and training programmes for law enforcement officials had since been updated to include the issue of gender-based violence. Her delegation could provide the Committee with more detailed written information on the progress of cases connected with the events following 28 June 2009. Although the justice system and law enforcement authorities continued to face significant obstacles in that regard, it was the firm position of the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights that perpetrators of human rights violations connected with those events should not be allowed to escape justice.

35. **Mr. Suazo Barahona** (Honduras) said that article 332 of the Criminal Code, which had become known as the “anti-gang law”, had criminalized association with gangs and had thereby targeted young persons, but it had been revised in 2015 to refer more generally to organized crime. Security checks were conducted to ensure that public officials could be entrusted with information of varying levels of confidentiality. One security check was a lie detector test, but it should be noted that failure of such a test would not necessarily result in dismissal. The two other security checks were a drugs test and a financial assessment; the latter included an examination of the financial activities of the family members of the person under scrutiny.

36. **Mr. Heller Rouassant** (Country Rapporteur) thanked the delegation for having provided comprehensive responses to the Committee’s questions, noting that it might be helpful for some of the responses to be submitted in writing. The crime of using threats to obtain evidence had been incorporated into the draft criminal code, and degrading treatment had been separated from inhuman treatment, but those various crimes all involved elements of torture. It might be preferable to prevent the fragmentation of torture into separate crimes, since that would ensure that all perpetrators of acts of torture faced the same criminal penalties.

37. He would like to know whether the Labour Law mentioned earlier by the delegation established an obligation for all persons deprived of their liberty to work and, if so, whether any exceptions were made for sick persons or persons in pretrial detention. Since the State party’s ban on abortion did not allow any exceptions, it would be helpful to know whether there were plans to decriminalize the procedure, if only in certain exceptional circumstances, which would improve the protection of fundamental human rights. It was important that military and law enforcement personnel were prosecuted for human rights violations in civil courts and that the independence of the judiciary was guaranteed. It would be useful to have more information on the 26 actions relating to the prevention of torture planned for 2015, as referenced in paragraph 276 of the State party’s report.

38. **The Chair** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would like to know whether the plan to reduce overcrowding in penitentiary institutions by granting early release and parole would be expanded or implemented as a permanent policy. Had any targets been set in that regard? More information was also needed on persons held in pretrial detention, who constituted 54 per cent of the prison population, since it might be possible to reduce

overcrowding by releasing those who had already been held in pretrial detention for a period longer than their expected sentence. The Committee would be grateful for further statistical information on persons in pretrial detention. More detailed information on the problem of violence among prisoners would also be helpful. It seemed unlikely, for example, that there had not been any cases of violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons, even though no complaints had been filed, and it was possible that such incidents were either not reported or not recorded. The State party should set more precise targets to improve health-care provision in prisons as a matter of urgency, since it remained far below international standards. It was especially urgent in the light of the overcrowding of the penitentiary system.

39. It was important to improve the systems in place for filing complaints of torture and ill-treatment. The 13 complaints received by the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights regarding abuse by law enforcement officials, for example, were surely not an accurate reflection of the full extent of the problem. Could the delegation comment on that low figure? More information on complaints that fell beyond the competence of the Office of the Special Prosecutor would also be welcome. Were there reliable, safe and confidential systems in place to allow prisoners to file complaints? How many had been received and what had their outcomes been? The Committee would like to know whether command responsibility had been considered in the cases of human rights violations connected with the events following 28 June 2009.

40. He had understood from the delegation's response to the question on hate crime that bias was considered an aggravating circumstance rather than a specific crime. It would nevertheless be preferable for hate crime to be incorporated into the Criminal Code as a specific crime, since it would then be possible to monitor its prevalence. He would like confirmation that no law enforcement officials had been granted amnesty under Decree No. 2-2010. Finally, he would like to know whether the State party would conduct an assessment of victims of torture in cooperation with civil society organizations and whether a statement would be issued in support of the vital work of human rights defenders in Honduras.

41. **Mr. Bruni** said that he would like more information on the involvement of the armed forces in the management of the penitentiary system. In paragraph 136 of the periodic report, it was stated that, to reduce overcrowding in the penitentiary system, three new pretrial detention centres had been established at military facilities, including one run by the Cobras Squadron. Could the delegation comment on that apparent militarization of the penitentiary system? Had a plan been developed to replace the members of the armed forces involved in the management of the system with appropriately trained personnel, as had been recommended by the authors of a report on the human rights situation in the State party published by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in December 2015? According to the same report, the poor conditions in the detention centre run by the Cobras Squadron in themselves constituted a form of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment. He would like the delegation to comment on those findings.

42. **Mr. Hani** said he hoped that torture would be duly defined and criminalized in the new draft of the Military Code and that it would carry penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offence. He wished to know if training on human rights, including the Convention, was offered at military police training schools. He would be interested to hear about the abuses which, according to statistics provided by the State party, had occurred in 1 per cent of the 500,000 missions carried out by the military police. He understood that the armed forces were to be withdrawn from policing duties and wished to know if there were plans to withdraw them from the administration of prisons also.

43. He asked the delegation to explain what steps the Government intended to take to address the persistent budgetary problems affecting the National Committee for the

Prevention of Torture and Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (CONAPREV), particularly in the light of the fact that two CONAPREV local committees risked losing funding altogether. He was also concerned at the low level of implementation of CONAPREV recommendations. His impression was that short-term recommendations, which generally had to be applied by prison governors, were being implemented while medium and long-term recommendations, which were often the responsibility of the Government, were not followed up. Was the Government intending to promote the independence of CONAPREV by taking account of the recommendations of civil society concerning the appointment of members?

44. He asked the delegation to provide information about how personal data were protected by law and sought more details about the national plan for the rehabilitation of victims of torture. Did Honduras intend to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture?

45. **Ms. Belmir** said that, although a new draft of the Military Code was being prepared, in the meantime the current Code, which dated from 1906, remained in force and she was extremely concerned that its provisions against torture, when committed by military personnel, were more lenient than the equivalent provisions in the Criminal Code. She was also concerned about a dysfunction within the criminal justice system whereby, according to information the Committee had received, police or military officers could refuse to cooperate with investigating judges — for example, in such matters as gaining access to premises or carrying out ballistic tests — with the result that the justice system was unable to fulfil its obligations. Radical reform might be required in order to maintain the rule of law. A study of the experience of transitional justice in other countries in Latin America and elsewhere could help the State party address the problems it was facing in that regard. The questions she had raised concerning the murder of women and children had not been adequately addressed.

46. **Ms. Gaer** asked whether the militarization of prisons was intended as a way to break the system of self-government which, according to the periodic report, was the reason for overcrowding, particularly in view of the fact that draft regulations being considered for prisons established mechanisms to take back control by eliminating inmates' privileges and prohibiting them from conducting business. Was the system of self-government out of control? She wondered exactly who guarded the places of detention that had been heavily militarized, who had oversight over the military police and whether any member of that corps had ever faced investigation or prosecution.

The meeting was suspended at 5.30 p.m. and resumed at 5.40 p.m.

47. **Mr. Suazo Barahona** (Honduras) said that two new prisons were due to open in October. However, the construction of new facilities and the expansion of existing facilities was not the main focus of measures to reduce overcrowding. The formation of the interdisciplinary boards, 25 in all, was expected to be completed during the current year and, as each board gained its full complement of members, it became operational and could begin identifying inmates for early release. The work of the boards only affected convicted prisoners, not those still awaiting trial. The regulations in force required more widespread application of non-custodial penalties, except in the case of 21 offences for which custodial penalties were obligatory. However, due to concerns about transparency and fairness in the application of the alternative penalties — to whom they would apply and to whom they would not — judges and prosecutors had opted not to pursue them as much as they should. Steps were being taken to ensure that non-custodial penalties were more widely applied and to reduce the list of 21 offences for which custodial penalties were required by law.

48. No statistics were available on the average time persons had to wait before being tried, but under the law the maximum period for pretrial detention was 2 years. Persons

who had not been tried within two years had to be released. That was a matter of concern to the authorities as some of the persons released in that way were a danger to society, and the whole issue of persons in pretrial detention was currently being reviewed. Strategies to contain crime without detaining so many people were also being considered, particularly for offences such as drug use and extortion where arresting the immediate perpetrator of the offence served little or no purpose as long as the organizers remained at large. Over the course of time it was hoped that such measures would also serve to reduce overcrowding in places of deprivation of liberty. Santa Barbara prison was due to be closed and the prisoners transferred to a new facility.

49. He shared the Committee's concerns about prisoners' ability to lodge complaints. The lack of an adequate system was problematic, not just for the prisoners themselves but also for the authorities. Work on a complaints system had begun very recently. A manual was being produced, a format devised and procedures set up for dealing with complaints, while an information campaign was being prepared and special "drop boxes" affixed inside prisons. The National Prison Institute was in the process of contracting doctors, including for the interdisciplinary boards.

50. The militarization of prisons was a temporary measure. The three detention centres located in military facilities housed a total of just 55 detainees. All of them were persons who had created situations of conflict in the institutions in which they had been housed previously and they had been moved to the military facilities for security reasons. Measures taken to ensure that persons in detention were unable to communicate directly with persons on the outside had proved difficult to implement and ineffective, especially in places where the prison was in an urban area. Once the new prison facilities and adequate technological controls were in place, the temporary use of military facilities could be terminated.

51. Education and training on the administration of places of deprivation of liberty were available, including in a special academy that had been set up for that purpose, and the prison service was being institutionalized with the creation of different ranks and categories of officials. Access to personal data was restricted to the heads of the office which processed those data. The budget allocation of CONAPREV would be reviewed by the Ministry of Finance and an appropriate solution found.

52. **Ms. Cueva Aguilar** (Honduras) said that the defence of human rights was a matter of great political importance in Honduras. It was enshrined in the Act for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders. Moreover, Honduras had been one of the States that supported Human Rights Council resolution 31/32 of 24 March 2016 on protecting human rights defenders addressing economic, social and cultural rights.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.