



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

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Committee against Torture

Concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*

1. The Committee against Torture considered the combined third and fourth periodic reports of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (CAT/C/VEN/3-4) at its 1256th and 1259th meetings (CAT/C/SR.1256 and 1259), held on 6 and 7 November 2014, and adopted the following concluding observations at its 1274th meeting (CAT/C/SR.1274), held on 19 November 2014.

Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the combined third and fourth periodic reports of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (CAT/C/VEN/3-4), although it regrets that the document was submitted eight years after it was due.

3. The Committee appreciates the State party's written replies (CAT/C/VEN/Q/3-4/Add.1) to the list of issues (CAT/C/VEN/Q/3-4) and the supplementary information provided during the consideration of the combined periodic reports. It also appreciates the dialogue held with the State party's delegation, although it regrets that some of its questions went unanswered.

Positive aspects

4. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the State party has ratified or acceded to the following international instruments:

(a) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, on 23 September 2003;

(b) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on 24 September 2013.

5. The Committee welcomes the fact that the State party has taken the following legislative measures in areas related to the Convention:

* Adopted by the Committee at its fifty-third session (3–28 November 2014).



(a) Promulgation of the Special Act to Prevent and Punish Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (Anti-Torture Act), on 4 June 2013;

(b) Adoption of the Act on Disarmament and Arms and Munitions Control, on 11 June 2013;

(c) Promulgation of the Act on Women's Right to a Life Free from Violence, on 19 March 2007;

(d) Adoption of the Act to Punish Politically Motivated Crimes, Disappearances, Torture and Other Human Rights Violations in the Period 1958–1998, on 25 November 2011.

6. The Committee also commends the State party's efforts to amend its policies and procedures in order to afford greater protection for human rights and to apply the Convention, in particular:

(a) The adoption in February 2014 of the National Plan for the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment;

(b) The establishment in September 2013 of the National Office to Combat Organized Crime and the Financing of Terrorism, which is responsible for preventing and combating trafficking in persons;

(c) The introduction in March and October 2010 of special courts and prosecution services to deal with violence against women.

Principal subjects of concern and recommendations

Definition of the offence of torture

7. The Committee notes that the definition of torture as set out in article 17 of the Anti-Torture Act is incomplete inasmuch as it applies solely when the victims are in the custody of a public official. Article 17 also does not categorize as torture any pain or suffering inflicted at the instigation of, or with the consent or acquiescence of, a public official or by another person acting in an official capacity. The conduct of public officials at whose instigation or with whose consent acts of torture are committed by another individual is likewise not categorized as complicity or participation in torture (arts. 1 and 4).

The Committee urges the State party to consider bringing the content of article 17 of the Anti-Torture Act into line with the provisions of article 1 of the Convention in order to include pain or suffering inflicted by a person acting in an official capacity or inflicted at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official upon individuals, irrespective of whether or not they have been deprived of their liberty. In that regard, the Committee recalls its general comment No. 2 (2007), on the implementation of article 2 of the Convention by States parties, which states that serious discrepancies between the Convention's definition and that incorporated into domestic law create actual or potential loopholes for impunity (CAT/C/GC/2, para. 9).

In addition, the State should ensure that any act by any person which constitutes complicity or participation in torture is categorized as such and punished by means of appropriate penalties which reflect the gravity of the act.

Impunity

8. The Committee is concerned about the information provided by the State party according to which, of a total of 31,096 complaints of human rights violations received from 2011 to 2014, only 3.1 per cent resulted in prosecution by the Public Prosecution

Service. The Committee regrets that the information provided does not include up-to-date official data on the verdicts and sentences handed down during this period. According to the statistics annexed to the combined third and fourth periodic reports, between 2003 and 2011 only 12 officials were sentenced for committing acts of torture. The Committee is deeply concerned about reports that prosecutors are often failing to initiate investigations ex officio, despite clear signs of injury to detained persons (arts. 12 and 13).

The Committee urges the State party to:

(a) Guarantee victims immediate access to judicial bodies to report incidents of torture and ill-treatment and ensure their protection;

(b) Take steps to ensure that any allegations of torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officers are investigated ex officio and in a prompt, thorough and impartial manner, from the moment that detained persons are brought before the procedural court. Such investigations should be the responsibility of an independent body composed of prosecutors chosen by public competition and with authority to take decisions and act independently;

(c) Accelerate the process of restructuring, purging and training of the police force and ensure that the Public Prosecution Service entrusts the investigation of reports of torture or ill-treatment by law enforcement officers only to independent investigators;

(d) Prosecute the alleged perpetrators of acts of torture or ill-treatment and, if they are found guilty, ensure that their sentences are commensurate with the gravity of their acts.

Arbitrary detention and due process guarantees

9. The Committee takes note of the data from the Public Prosecution Service showing that 3,306 persons, including 400 adolescents, were detained from February to June 2014 in connection with demonstrations that occurred during that period. The Committee is concerned about consistent reports that many of these detentions were arbitrary, inasmuch as no arrest warrants were issued and no one was apprehended in flagrante delicto, as in the detentions in residential areas near the protest sites. The Committee also notes that the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found the detention of political opposition members Leopoldo López and Daniel Ceballos to be arbitrary and that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern at the prolonged and arbitrary detention of opposition members and demonstrators. The Committee is likewise concerned about information indicating that many of the detainees were not informed of the reasons for their detention, were not given the opportunity to confer with an attorney in private until just minutes before their court hearing and were shifted around to various detention centres without their family members being informed of their whereabouts. In addition, in some cases, detainees allegedly received no medical treatment until the court hearing, even though there was clear evidence that they had been subjected to violence (arts. 2 and 16).

The State party should adopt effective measures without delay to ensure that persons are arrested in flagrante delicto only at the precise moment of the commission of an offence and, in conformity with the opinions of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, to secure the immediate release of Leopoldo López and Daniel Ceballos and all those who have been arbitrarily detained for having exercised their right to self-expression and peaceful protest. The State should also ensure the enjoyment, from the moment a person is deprived of his or her liberty, of all the fundamental legal safeguards, in particular by:

- (a) **Reinforcing procedures for confidential and independent medical examination when a detainee arrives at a detention centre and ensuring the provision of prompt, appropriate and confidential care when it is requested;**
- (b) **Providing unrestricted access to a lawyer appointed by the court or chosen by the detainee, including consultations in private;**
- (c) **Ensuring that detainees are informed of the reasons for their detention and have the right to communicate with their families;**
- (d) **Ensuring that detainees are brought before a procedural court within 48 hours, as required by article 44, paragraph 1, of the State party's Constitution;**
- (e) **Ensuring that detainees have the right to immediately challenge the lawfulness of the detention;**
- (f) **Regularly monitoring compliance with the legal safeguards by public officials and ensuring that those who do not comply with them and those responsible for arbitrary detention are duly sanctioned.**

Torture and ill-treatment of persons arrested during protests

10. The Committee is alarmed by consistent reports of acts of torture and ill-treatment inflicted on persons arrested during the demonstrations that took place from February to July 2014. Such acts reportedly included beatings, electric shocks, burns, choking, sexual assault and threats, allegedly for the purpose of destroying evidence of actions by security forces, acquiring information, inflicting punishment or extracting confessions or as manifestations of gender-based discrimination. The Committee notes that although the Public Prosecution Service has conducted 185 investigations into cruel treatment, charges have been brought in only five cases and investigations of two torture complaints are still ongoing. The Committee is concerned that, according to information received, many of the persons affected did not report the ill-treatment for fear of reprisals, and some were allegedly threatened after lodging complaints (arts. 2, 12, 13 and 16).

The State party should:

- (a) **Ensure that all complaints and cases of torture and ill-treatment of detainees are investigated promptly, thoroughly and independently, including the investigation of officials who knew or should have known that such acts were being committed and failed to prevent or report them;**
- (b) **Ensure, without prejudice to the presumption of innocence, that officials who are suspects are immediately suspended from their duties and remain suspended for the duration of the investigation;**
- (c) **Provide for the protection of persons who have reported ill-treatment and duly inform them of the progress and outcome of their complaints;**
- (d) **Require all officials to report cases of torture or ill-treatment of which they are aware, in conformity with article 31 of the Anti-Torture Act, and adopt protective measures to ensure confidentiality and safety for officials who do so;**
- (e) **Bring to trial alleged perpetrators of acts of torture or ill-treatment and, if they are found guilty, impose upon them penalties proportionate to the gravity of their acts. The Committee draws attention to paragraph 10 of its general comment No. 2 (2007), in which it emphasizes that it would be a violation of the Convention to prosecute conduct solely as ill-treatment where the elements of torture are also present.**

Application of the Istanbul Protocol in investigations

11. The Committee takes note of the State party's explanations that forensic physicians abide by the provisions of the Istanbul Protocol. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned by reports that forensic medical evaluations often fail to provide a detailed description of injuries or interpretation of the findings. The Committee is also concerned about reports that such evaluations have not been made in all cases, or were made after several days had passed, or in the presence of law enforcement officers or prosecutors. The Committee also notes with concern that consistent reports indicate that in many cases the detainee was not given a copy of the medical evaluation (arts. 12 and 13).

The State party should:

(a) Ensure that forensic medical evaluations are carried out in a thorough manner and in accordance with the principles of confidentiality and privacy;

(b) Ensure that forensic medical evaluations are conducted using forms that are modelled on annex IV of the Istanbul Protocol and that include an interpretation of the findings;

(c) Adopt the legislative amendments required in order to accord full evidentiary value to the reports of independent medical experts;

(d) Ensure that all detained persons who ask to be examined by an independent physician or an official forensic physician receive copies of their request and of the medical report;

(e) Strengthen training concerning the Convention and the Istanbul Protocol not only for forensic physicians, but also for other medical personnel, police officers, prosecutors and prison and immigration officials involved in investigations or in the treatment of detainees.

Excessive use of force when containing demonstrations

12. The Committee notes with concern that 43 persons died in the course of the demonstrations that took place from February to June 2014 and that 878 persons were injured, of whom 68 per cent were civilians. According to statistics provided by the State party's delegation, 242 complaints were lodged concerning acts by State security officers, and charges have been filed against 15 of them. However, the Committee is concerned by the discrepancy between these figures and those provided by the Ombudsman's Office in the replies to the list of issues, which cited 558 investigations into suspicions that individuals were victims of excessive use of force by the police. The Committee is also concerned about consistent reports of unwarranted use of firearms and riot control equipment against protesters and in residential areas. The Committee also notes with concern that military units such as the Bolivarian National Guard were involved in controlling the demonstrations, although maintaining public order is not part of their duties and no state of emergency had been declared. The Committee further notes that there were 121 complaints of excessive use of force by members of this force in the exercise of their functions during this period (arts. 12, 13 and 16).

The State party should:

(a) Expedite the investigation and prosecution of such cases, impose appropriate penalties upon officials found guilty of such offences and afford the victims appropriate redress;

(b) Strengthen ongoing training for all law enforcement officers on the absolute prohibition of torture and on international standards on the use of force, as well as on their liability in the event of excessive use of force;

(c) Ensure that the institutions entrusted with maintaining public safety are civilian in nature, as stipulated in article 332 of the State party's Constitution, and amend any legislation, regulations and plans that authorize the participation of the military in the maintenance of public order except in exceptional situations, such as states of emergency, when the capacity of the police force has been overwhelmed.

Acquiescence and complicity with pro-Government armed groups

13. The Committee is concerned about reports that protesters were subjected to a total of 437 attacks by pro-Government armed groups during the demonstrations of February to April 2014. Consistent reports indicate that many of these attacks were carried out with the complicity and acquiescence of law enforcement officers and have gone unpunished. The Committee regrets not having received any official information about investigations conducted and penalties imposed in relation to the attacks perpetrated by these groups, although it had requested such information in the list of issues (arts. 2, 12 and 16).

The State party should:

(a) Conduct prompt, thorough and impartial investigations of all attacks by pro-Government armed groups during the demonstrations and duly prosecute perpetrators and officials who were complicit in or allowed those acts to occur and, if they are found guilty, impose on them penalties proportionate to the gravity of their acts;

(b) Take immediate steps to devise effective strategies to disarm, control and dismantle armed groups of civilians;

(c) Restrict the performance of internal security functions to a duly trained civilian police force that adheres to relevant international standards and has sufficient resources to carry out its duties.

Attacks on journalists and human rights defenders

14. The Committee is concerned about reports that there were 259 attacks, threats and cases of intimidation and harassment of journalists between January and April 2014. The Committee is also seriously concerned about the great number of attacks and cases of intimidation of human rights defenders that have gone unpunished. It regrets the lack of statistics on the number of complaints and convictions for threats and attacks on these groups and on measures taken to prevent such acts. The Committee is also deeply concerned about reports of public denigration of human rights defenders by high-level Government officials — including after the dialogue with the Committee — such as the attacks against Carlos Correa, Humberto Prado and Marino Alvarado by the president of the National Assembly, citing information provided by “patriot partners”. Such denigration increases the danger that human rights defenders may be exposed to intimidation by violent pro-Government groups (arts. 2, 12, 13 and 16).

The Committee calls on the State party to refrain from discrediting the work of human rights defenders and to publicly acknowledge the essential watchdog role that they and journalists play as regards the fulfilment of obligations under the Convention, and urges it to:

(a) Redouble its efforts to ensure the effective protection of human rights defenders and journalists against threats and attacks to which they may be exposed on account of their activities;

(b) Ensure the prompt, thorough and effective investigation of all threats and attacks targeting human rights defenders and journalists, and ensure that those responsible are tried and punished in accordance with the gravity of their acts;

(c) Ensure that no individual or group is threatened or subjected to physical or other abuse or publicly discredited for providing information to the Committee against Torture or to other United Nations human rights bodies that are performing their respective mandates.

Extrajudicial killings

15. The Committee is dismayed by reports of a widespread pattern of extrajudicial killings committed by police or vigilante groups and notes that, according to the replies to the list of issues, 667 killings were committed by law enforcement officers in 2012 and 600 in 2013. Some of those killings reportedly occurred despite measures in place to protect victims, as was true of 8 of the 10 killings of members of the Barrios family (arts. 2, 12, 13 and 16).

The State party should take steps immediately to put an end to these crimes and comply fully with its obligation to ensure that extrajudicial killings are investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially and that the alleged perpetrators are brought to justice and, if found guilty, duly punished.

Judicial independence

16. The Committee is seriously concerned about the judiciary's lack of independence from the executive branch, as evidenced by the case of Judge María Lourdes Afiuni, who, having ordered the conditional release of a detainee whose detention had exceeded the legal maximum length and had been considered arbitrary by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, was imprisoned after the executive had publicly requested that she be sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment. The Committee notes that Judge Afiuni was held in pretrial detention for more than a year in conditions that threatened her health and safety and is deeply troubled by reports that she was sexually assaulted by a public official during her detention. The Committee finds it regrettable that, even though this offence was a publicly actionable one, the State has thus far not on its own motion instigated an investigation. The Committee also notes with concern that security of judicial tenure is not guaranteed, since 62 per cent of judges are temporary and can be appointed or removed at will. The Committee is concerned that the prosecution of Ms. Afiuni and the dismissal of temporary judges, allegedly for adopting decisions unfavourable to the Government, have had a negative impact on the independence of other judges, undermining the safeguards of the rule of law that are necessary for effective protection against torture (arts. 2, 12 and 13).

The State party should:

(a) Conduct promptly and of its own motion a thorough and impartial investigation into the allegations of torture and ill-treatment in the form of sexual assault allegedly committed against María Lourdes Afiuni during her detention at the National Women's Guidance Institute;

(b) Ensure that Ms. Afiuni receives a fair and independent trial and adequate compensation for the physical and mental harm she suffered during her detention;

(c) Respect the principle of presumption of innocence and refrain from public acts or statements that could have a negative influence on the independence of the judiciary;

(d) Take steps, as a matter of urgency, to ensure the full independence and non-removability of judges in conformity with applicable international standards. Specifically, the State party should, as soon as possible, organize independently administered public competitive examinations for entry into the judiciary, put an end

to the appointment of temporary judges and ensure the security of tenure and independence of current temporary judges.

Gender-based violence

17. The Committee is concerned that, despite a steady increase in the number of cases of violence against women, in particular femicide, and the large number of complaints, the percentage of cases in which charges are brought by the Public Prosecution Service is low and the application of protection measures insufficient. The Committee is also concerned about the small number of shelters and the lack of information on the provision of assistance and full redress to victims (arts. 2, 12, 13, 14 and 16).

The Committee urges the State party to:

(a) Ensure that all acts of violence against women are investigated promptly, effectively and impartially, and that the perpetrators are tried and punished in accordance with the gravity of their acts;

(b) Strengthen the special courts dealing with violence against women and establish them in all states in the country;

(c) Ensure that victims have prompt access to protection measures, free legal aid and appropriate redress and to shelters, which should be available in all states in the country;

(d) Incorporate the crime of femicide into the law and ensure its full and effective enforcement, providing the necessary resources and adopting regulations and a national plan for its implementation;

(e) Strengthen efforts to raise awareness and provide education about gender-based violence for public officials who work directly with victims and for the general public.

Conditions of detention

18. The Committee takes note of the information submitted by the State after the dialogue, indicating that the prison population currently stands at 50,721 and that there is therefore no prison overcrowding as the capacity of the country's prisons is 51,127. The Committee notes with concern the significant discrepancy between these figures and those provided in other reports, which indicate that the overcrowding rate in the prison system during the first half of 2014 was 190 per cent. The Committee is also concerned about the high proportion of detainees awaiting trial (65.71 per cent) and finds it regrettable that it has not received the official data that it requested on the number of persons detained in police jails, of whom, according to reports received, there are more than 13,000. The Committee is also concerned about the discrepancy between reports of shortcomings in medical care, water and food supply and sanitation and ventilation in cells and official information, which indicates that conditions are satisfactory. The Committee also notes with concern reports, denied by the State party, that opposition politicians Leopoldo López, Enzo Scarano, Daniel Ceballos and Salvatore Lucchese were kept in solitary confinement for months and that Enzo Scarano was beaten (arts. 2, 11 and 16).

The Committee calls upon the State to publish official data, disaggregated by place of custody, on the capacity of detention facilities, including police jails, in relation to the size of the prison population. The Committee also urges the State to permit without delay a visit by the Special Rapporteur on the question of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and to allow non-governmental organizations access to all places of deprivation of liberty, so that they can verify the progress reported by the State. The State should also:

- (a) Ensure that alleged acts in breach of the Convention committed against its political opponents during their detention are duly investigated and the perpetrators punished;
- (b) Ensure that solitary confinement is used only as a last resort, for the shortest time possible, under strict supervision and judicial control;
- (c) Bring conditions in police holding facilities into line with international human rights standards;
- (d) Take steps, as a matter of urgency, to increase the resources allocated for the provision of food, water, sanitation and medical and health care for detainees in all prisons and police holding facilities in the State party;
- (e) Adopt the necessary legislative amendments to facilitate access to non-custodial penalties and encourage their use, in accordance 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);
- (f) Take steps, as a matter of urgency, to strengthen existing action plans for reducing procedural delays by allocating them sufficient resources.

Prison violence

19. The Committee is alarmed at reports describing high levels of prison violence, with 4,791 recorded deaths and 9,931 injuries since January 2004. The Committee notes that the official death toll for persons deprived of their liberty in 2014 is 140, despite the explanation given by the State to the effect that violence has been eradicated under the country's new prison regime. The Committee notes with serious concern the high number of violent confrontations during the reporting period, both among inmates and, allegedly, between inmates and the authorities tasked with restoring order — for example, at the Centre-West Regional Penitentiary (Uribana prison) — and finds it regrettable that all of those confrontations are still under investigation. The Committee is also concerned that inmates are forced to perform military training drills (close order drills) and that women wishing to visit prisons have reportedly been subjected to body cavity searches (arts. 2, 11 and 16).

The Committee urges the State party to:

- (a) Continue making every effort to prevent inter-prisoner violence and eliminate the possession of weapons in all prisons;
- (b) Conduct prompt, exhaustive and impartial investigations into all cases of prison violence, assessing any possibility that prison officers or other staff might bear responsibility for violence connected with arms trafficking, operations to restore order in certain prisons or cases of collusion. Where appropriate, the State should punish those responsible appropriately and provide compensation to the victims' families;
- (c) Ensure that the Remote Control and Security System is effectively implemented and that searches are conducted in a manner that is least intrusive and most respectful of the individual's integrity;
- (d) Refrain from involving the prison population in military training and increase activities geared towards the social reintegration of prisoners.

Ombudsman's Office and National Commission for the Prevention of Torture

20. The Committee finds regrettable the lack of information on the outcome of 48 per cent of the complaints of acts of torture or ill-treatment received and resolved by the Ombudsman's Office between 2002 and 2014 and on the outcome of visits to detention centres. The Committee expresses concern at the fact that the Office appears to lack the degree of independence required to serve as the national institution responsible for investigating complaints of torture and ill-treatment. The Committee is also concerned that 6 of the 13 members of the National Commission for the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment, which was established under the Anti-Torture Act to serve as a prevention mechanism, are affiliated with the executive branch. Given the confidential nature of the complaints received by the Commission and of its recommendations to the Government, the presence of members of the executive compromises the body's independence (arts. 2, 11 and 16).

The State party should take effective measures to ensure that the Ombudsman's Office is in practice a functioning, independent body, in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). As the National Commission for the Prevention of Torture acts as the national preventive mechanism, the State party should ensure that its members are completely independent of the executive, in accordance with the guidelines on national preventive mechanisms established by the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture. Bearing in mind the commitment made by the State party during the dialogue, the Committee urges it to expedite the process of ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Redress

21. The Committee welcomes the fact that the National Plan for the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment includes an area of work devoted to the defence of victims. Nevertheless, the Committee finds it regrettable that rehabilitation programmes for victims of torture have not yet been developed as stipulated in article 10 of the Anti-Torture Act. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of official data on the number of torture victims who have benefited from the right to adequate redress and compensation (art. 14).

The State party should redouble its efforts to provide medical, psychological and social assistance to all victims of torture and ill-treatment and to members of their families through services affiliated with the State party's public health system. The State should also provide prompt redress to victims of torture and ill-treatment, including fair and adequate compensation.

22. The Committee invites the State party to consider ratifying other United Nations human rights treaties to which it is not yet a party, in particular the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The Committee also urges the State party to reassess the possibility of withdrawing its denunciation of the American Convention on Human Rights.

23. The State party is requested to disseminate widely the report it submitted to the Committee and the Committee's concluding observations, in appropriate languages, through official websites, the media and non-governmental organizations.

24. The Committee requests the State party to provide, by 28 November 2015, follow-up information in response to the Committee's recommendations relating to: (a) ensuring or strengthening safeguards for persons deprived of their liberty; (b) conducting prompt, impartial and effective investigations into all allegations of torture, ill-treatment and excessive use of force by law enforcement officials and pro-Government armed groups; and (c) prosecuting suspects and sanctioning perpetrators of torture or ill-treatment, as contained in paragraphs 8 (b) and (d), 9 and 10 (a) and (e) of the present concluding observations.

25. The Committee invites the State party to submit its fifth periodic report by 28 November 2018. To that end, it invites the State party to agree to use the optional reporting procedure, which consists of the transmittal by the Committee of a list of issues prior to the submission of the State party's report. As provided for in article 19 of the Convention, the State party's replies to that list of issues would constitute its next periodic report.
