



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

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Summary record of the 2154th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 2 March 2012, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Avtonomov

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention (*continued*)

Thirteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of Jordan (continued) (CERD/C/JOR/13-17; CERD/C/JOR/Q/13-17)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Jordan took places at the Committee table.*
2. **The Chairperson**, speaking in a personal capacity, said he had been pleased to learn since the previous meeting that measures had been taken to preserve ethnic minority languages, including Circassian and Chechen.
3. **Mr. Sukayri** (Jordan) said that Circassians and Chechens could maintain their traditional cultural practices and even had their own satellite television channel.
4. Some members of the Committee had noted that no NGOs had been present at the previous meeting. He regretted their absence because his Government worked in a spirit of partnership with all NGOs. However, 18 NGOs had been present at meetings held the previous week to consider his country's periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.
5. **Mr. Hyassat** (Jordan) said that no official data disaggregated by ethnicity and religion were currently available. Some data on minority groups had been used to establish a quota system in order to ensure political representation for Christians, Circassians and Chechens. Generally speaking, however, data were disaggregated only by gender and geographical area. The delegation had taken note of the Committee's comments in that regard.
6. **Mr. Sukayri** (Jordan) said that, while the Bedouin were very proud of their origins, they no longer lived as their ancestors had. Over the past 50 years, the nomadic Bedouin had become sedentary, with 90 per cent now living in urban areas. They sent their children to schools and universities both in Jordan and abroad. All Bedouin enjoyed full rights on an equal footing with other citizens.
7. **Mr. Al Dehayyat** (Jordan) said that a national human rights institution had been established to promote and protect human rights in accordance with international standards. As part of its mandate, it provided human rights training and developed awareness-raising programmes.
8. A strict regulatory framework governed withdrawal of nationality. Jordanian citizenship could be withdrawn from a Palestinian only after it had been established that he or she would be able to reclaim their Palestinian documents and return to the West Bank. Those who considered they had been unjustly deprived of their citizenship could appeal the decision; if successful, their citizenship would be restored. The Supreme Court of Justice had issued decisions in 12 such cases. A parliamentary body monitored the appeals process.
9. **Mr. Hyassat** (Jordan) said that, although his country was not a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, it had always recognized and upheld the peremptory norms of international refugee law, notably the principle of non-refoulement. Furthermore, under a memorandum of understanding concluded with UNHCR, refugees enjoyed many of the rights enjoyed by citizens.
10. His country had shouldered its share of the refugee burden. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had been mandated to take care of the first wave of Palestinian refugees who had arrived in the country in or after 1948. However, his Government had also provided considerable

additional assistance and support for those refugees. In cooperation with UNHCR, it had also done its utmost to accommodate and provide assistance to Iraqi refugees, who had arrived from the 1990s onwards. More than 80,000 Syrian refugees had recently arrived as a result of the internal situation in their country. The Government had set up a fully-equipped reception camp, but to date Syrian refugees had opted to stay with family members, friends and Jordanians who had opened their homes to them.

11. Despite the country's limited resources and overstretched capacity, a culture of tolerance and respect for all human beings prevailed, as testified by the fact that so many persons sought refuge there.

12. **Mr. Sukayri** (Jordan) said that the situation of refugees in his country was complex. Palestinian refugees who had arrived following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 had been granted Jordanian citizenship and were considered to be Jordanians of Palestinian origin. Persons residing in the West Bank at the time of Jordan's disengagement from that area were considered to be Palestinians, while East Bank residents were considered to be Jordanians. Palestinians with Jordanian nationality enjoyed the same rights and had the same responsibilities as other Jordanians. However, in order to maintain their right to return to Palestine and to receive compensation in compliance with United Nations resolutions, they were considered as refugees.

13. **Mr. Al Museimi** (Jordan) explained that the reference to the lack of recorded cases of racial discrimination in paragraph 2 of the report (CERD/C/JOR/13-17) meant that no general discrimination against a specific group had been reported. However, many complaints of racial discrimination had been filed by individuals under article 150 of the Criminal Code. Legal proceedings had been brought against the perpetrators of such acts and convictions handed down.

14. **Mr. Hyassat** (Jordan) said that the National Human Rights Centre had recently called on the Government to accede to a number of international instruments providing for individual complaints procedures, including optional protocols. A committee established to consider the issue had advised that national complaints mechanisms, such as the National Human Rights Centre and the Office of the Ombudsman, should first be strengthened in order, inter alia, to ensure the enforceability of their decisions and the effectiveness of domestic remedies. His Government would then need to assess the impact of such measures before considering whether to accede to the relevant international instruments. It had signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but had yet to ratify it.

15. **Mr. Al Museimi** (Jordan) said that the role of the Constitution in protecting the human rights of citizens and non-citizens had been strengthened by recent reforms. One of the most important developments had been a legal amendment providing for the establishment of a constitutional court. It had always been possible to challenge the constitutionality of laws before the courts, but the new system would allow the court to interpret constitutional provisions within a specific framework. Both citizens and non-citizens would be able to bring cases before it in accordance with the established procedures.

16. There was no need for a separate definition of racial discrimination in domestic legislation because international instruments ratified by the State party had the force of law in the domestic legal system and took precedence over national laws. Since the Convention was an integral part of domestic law, the definition contained therein could be taken into account by the courts. The Supreme Court had overturned a number of sentences that were contrary to the provisions of international instruments; the Court of Cassation had also reaffirmed the principle that international instruments prevailed over national laws.

17. **Mr. Hyassat** (Jordan) said that quotas had been set to guarantee the representation of women and minorities in parliament.
18. **Mr. Al Dehayyat** (Jordan) said the National Centre for Human Rights had legal personality under Jordanian law. It received complaints, had the power to request further information, and visited and supervised rehabilitation centres through its board of trustees, who were appointed by the Council of Ministers.
19. He drew attention to Jordan's current financial constraints, including a significant fall in national revenue, especially in the tourism sector, and its impact on the country's resources.
20. The National Centre for Human Rights was represented on a national coordinating committee. He stressed the Government's efforts to support the Centre, given its important human rights role in the country. A new Commissioner had recently been appointed on the recommendation of the board of trustees, reflecting the Centre's independent status.
21. **Mr. Sukayri** (Jordan) said that, in accordance with article 14 of Act No. 11 of 2008, the Office of the Ombudsman received complaints relating to administrative decisions or the absence thereof. It verified complaints and background information, and a specific form had to be filled out by the complainant or their legal representative. The Ombudsman then issued a decision on the matter, a public text which included the grounds for the decision. The Office could investigate any complaints against public administrative bodies or their officials, but would not consider complaints in cases where a legal challenge had already been filed with an administrative or judicial body or a ruling had been issued.
22. In 2010, a total of 1,572 complaints had been filed against a number of administrative bodies. The civil service had been the subject of 167 complaints, of which 117 had related to recruitment, 30 to administrative decisions, 14 to a change of post and 4 to competitive examinations.
23. **Mr. Al Museimi** (Jordan), speaking on the right to form associations and trade unions, said that Jordanian labour legislation also covered non-Jordanian nationals. Article 23 of the Constitution guaranteed the right of association. As a result of recent amendments to the relevant legislation, Jordanian nationality was no longer a prerequisite for joining a trade union; members of any profession could form or join a union.
24. All Jordanian citizens were equal before the law and could appeal to the courts for redress. Criminal legislation included not only the Criminal Code, but also a number of other legal enactments and regulations, such as the laws on publications and access to information, which also defined acts punishable by law.
25. The Jordanian Constitution guaranteed the right of all Jordanian citizens to form civil society associations. Act No. 51 of 2008 regulated the relevant procedures and provided for various kinds of associations, such as private or closed associations. The number of founder members required had been reduced and, in order to simplify the registration procedure, a time frame had been established whereby a request which met all the relevant legal conditions was automatically approved after two months. Members of the governing body of the Associations Registration Office represented the competent ministries and the voluntary sector.
26. Jordanian citizens could join political parties, regardless of their race, colour or any other considerations. The most recent amendment to the Constitution had provided additional guarantees to enhance the promotion of human rights. For example, there were now two levels at which administrative decisions could be appealed.
27. **Mr. Hyassat** (Jordan), referring to associations with non-Jordanian members, said that if a member of an NGO or association was not a Jordanian national, an application had

to be submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister. If no response was received within a given time frame, the application was considered approved. If an NGO or association received foreign funding, approval and monitoring were required, inter alia as a safeguard against terrorism. He confirmed that non-Jordanians did have the right to join associations.

28. **Mr. Al Dehayyat** (Jordan), speaking on the question of migrant workers and domestic workers, said that the Labour Code of 2010 covered workers legally resident in Jordan and regulated employment contracts, working hours and working conditions. Special agencies dealt with domestic workers. Prospective employers had to open a bank account in the name of the worker, a procedure monitored by the Ministry of Labour. Legally resident migrant workers were able to join social security funds and to receive a pension and other benefits. Trade unions were civil associations with special rules, and certain conditions had to be met in order to join a union. If migrant or domestic workers felt victimized, they could appeal to the courts for redress. The monitoring of domestic work fell within the remits of the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of the Interior. Residence permits were usually granted for two years and, at end of that period, employers had to pay workers all the benefits to which they were entitled and provide them with a ticket back to their country of origin. Migrant workers' rights were guaranteed under Jordanian law.

29. **Mr. Hyassat** (Jordan) said that there was ongoing cooperation with countries of origin, such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, to ensure that the rights of domestic workers were upheld. Recently, a standardized contract for domestic work had been drawn up, including terms such as the employer's obligation to open a bank account in the worker's name, working hours and rest periods. A significant amount of progress had been made, and it was hoped that further measures would follow.

30. **Mr. Al Museimi** (Jordan), referring to the issue of human trafficking, said that although earlier regulations had addressed the matter, Act No. 9 of 2009 had further defined and criminalized human trafficking. A legislative framework had been established to combat human trafficking, in accordance with the provisions of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which supplemented the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The law also provided that the consent of victims could not be used to appeal for leniency, and more severe sanctions were imposed in cases of involving the trafficking of women or children. The Attorney General supervised procedures relating to cases involving human trafficking, even if the victims had committed a crime.

31. In accordance with the law, a national committee to combat human trafficking had been established under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice and consisted of representatives of all the competent authorities. The committee's competence included the implementation of a strategy to combat human trafficking, reviewing legislation in that field, and raising awareness of human trafficking among employers, workers and agencies. The law provided for the establishment of a shelter for trafficking victims, physical and psychological rehabilitation programmes, and social reintegration schemes for victims. There were awareness-raising courses, specialized training for public prosecutors and judges, plans for a media campaign and schemes to train judges to instruct their peers and students at the judicial institute. A pilot website on the issue of trafficking had been created; it contained information on international conventions, workers' rights, a complaints procedure and follow-up mechanisms. A national field work team had been established to investigate suspected cases of trafficking and provide assistance to victims. A system had been established to move trafficking victims to a place of safety as part of ongoing efforts to create an institutional framework for providing assistance to victims.

32. **Mr. Hyassat** (Jordan) said that the Government was taking steps to deal with the multifaceted problem of honour crimes. Measures included working with community and religious leaders to establish the fact that the practice had nothing to do with religion.

33. The exonerating clause for honour crimes had been repealed in order to ensure that perpetrators could not get away with their crimes. There was some confusion regarding articles 97 and 98 of the Criminal Code, which related to crimes committed in a “fit of rage”. That concept did not relate exclusively to honour crimes and could be applied in other circumstances. However, those two articles had not been invoked during sentencing for honour crimes since 2010, and the minimum sentence for such crimes had been 10 years’ imprisonment. Thankfully, the number of honour crimes was declining and it was hoped that the practice would die out.

34. **Mr. Sukayri** (Jordan), describing the functioning of the Directorate of Public Security and its complaints and human rights bureau, said that the Directorate’s work to protect and promote the human rights of all those living in Jordan was consistent with his Government’s obligations under the Convention. All acts of racial discrimination were condemned and prohibited, and the Directorate worked to eliminate barriers between different communities and religions. In order to combat the incitement of racial hatred and to prevent the rise of extremist groups, information gathered on such groups was sent to the judiciary, and those responsible for incitement to discrimination or incitement to hatred were prosecuted. All persons had access to justice on an equal footing. Law enforcement officials, who were ethnically diverse, were trained to combat racial discrimination in their everyday work in order to protect citizens from discrimination. A code of conduct had been drawn up for those officials, in line with international standards.

35. Leaders of all religions were allowed to freely practise their religion, and actively promoted tolerance with the aim of preventing extremism and discrimination. Civil society actors also promoted human rights and tolerance for persons of all ethnic origins and religions.

36. Efforts were under way to bring reform, rehabilitation and correctional institutions into line with international standards. Programmes to combat discrimination and hatred based on religion or apostasy had been implemented in those institutions. Activities carried out with psychologists, social workers and religious leaders to ensure that extremist ideas were not propagated there had been very successful. Friday prayers in mosques advocated tolerance and condemned incitement to discrimination.

37. The Family Protection Department had been established in order to protect women and children from domestic violence. Perpetrators of domestic violence were prosecuted and work was carried out in conjunction with NGOs to prevent such acts of violence.

38. **Mr. Hyassat** (Jordan) said that his country had accepted many of the recommendations made by the Human Rights Council under the universal period review process. The Constitution had been amended in line with the recommendation on the prohibition of torture; the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences had visited Jordan in November 2011; and the Government was considering issuing invitations to other Human Rights Council special procedures mandate holders. It was also addressing the recommendation to reduce the backlog of periodic reports to be submitted to United Nations treaty bodies. Also in line with the recommendations, Jordan had amended its legislation to improve protection of domestic workers and had withdrawn its reservation to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Legislation making it a requirement to obtain approval in order to hold a public gathering had also been amended, and the competence of the State Security Court had been restricted.

39. **Mr. Al Dehayyat** (Jordan) said that his Government took its legal responsibility to provide health services to all persons living in Jordan very seriously, as illustrated by the number of hospital beds and doctors per inhabitant, which were in line with internationally accepted standards. Everyone had access to health care in clinics and hospitals under the

social security system. Those employed in the public sector had State health insurance. Military personnel had specific health insurance, and employees with private insurance enjoyed health services according to the type of health policy they had chosen.

40. Having acceded to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Government believed that education was a fundamental human right. Consequently, education was guaranteed for all in Jordan. He gave statistics regarding the number of schools and pupils for 2008. Just over half the total number of schools were State-run, 38 per cent were private and 3 per cent were run by UNRWA. Education was compulsory up to the tenth grade for all children. The Government allowed private schools to be established freely, on condition that they provided compulsory education up to the tenth grade. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization had stated that Jordan met the requirements of the Millennium Development Goals with regard to literacy rates.

41. In 2009, the National Human Rights Centre had signed a memorandum of understanding with the aim of incorporating human rights into school curricula.

42. **Mr. Amir** said that the problem of honour crimes, which was deeply rooted in Jordanian society, could not be solved merely through application of the Criminal Code. He expressed concern, in the absence of a specific law on honour crimes, at their possible consequences for victims and their families, and asked what medical and psychological support they were given. He asked whether, in the villages where honour crimes occurred, provision was made for dialogue between the parties involved in order to seek solutions to the underlying social problems bound up with honour crimes.

43. He wished to know whether all refugees in Jordan had the right to residence, employment and health care, including while their status was being determined, and what guarantees for their protection were provided in the legislation on refugees. He wished to know how legislation to combat racial discrimination had been brought into line with article 1 of the Convention. He asked whether a Jewish minority existed in Jordan, and if so, whether they enjoyed rights on an equal footing with other minorities. Information on that question would enable him to compare their rights with those of the Arab minorities living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan.

44. **Mr. Kut** asked for clarification of the division of work between the National Human Rights Centre and the Office of the Ombudsman in the areas of racism and intolerance, and details of the work of the two bodies in practice, including examples of cases dealt with and their outcomes. It would be useful to receive statistics in that regard in the following periodic report. To complement the comprehensive description of the legislative and judicial machinery for dealing with cases of racism and intolerance, he wished to know how those mechanisms were applied in practice, including the number of cases brought to court and their outcomes.

45. **Mr. Sukayri** (Jordan) said that the phenomenon of honour crimes — which was not exclusive to Jordan — had diverse origins and was closely bound up with the conservative nature of society, traditional practices and religious beliefs. The courts tended to no longer apply extenuating circumstances or lesser sentences to honour killings, which were now considered to be ordinary crimes. It was a deep-rooted problem, which Jordan was doing its utmost to address.

46. Palestinian refugees in Jordan were granted Jordanian nationality and had the same rights and obligations as Jordanians, including the right to work, the right to education and the right to health care. While there was no Jewish minority in Jordan, Jewish tourists came to Jordan for short periods under the peace agreement signed with Israel, which allowed free movement on both sides.

47. **Mr. Hyassat** said the National Human Rights Centre had a broader mandate than the Office of the Ombudsman. The latter focused mainly on issues relating to public administration and decisions affecting the rights of individuals. While there was some overlap between the two institutions in the area of public administration, the mandate of the Centre included the consolidation of human rights in Jordan and action to eliminate discrimination based on race, language, religion or gender. Neither body currently had the power to enforce their recommendations, which they referred to the legislative, executive and judicial branches, but that matter was under consideration.

48. **Mr. Al Shashani** (Jordan) said that of the 26 cases of murder in Jordan in 2011, only 2 had been considered to be honour killings. Honour killings in Jordan were rare. Similar phenomena occurred in Europe, where husbands sometimes killed their wives if they found they had been unfaithful.

49. **Mr. Al Dehayyat** (Jordan) said that there were security units in every hospital that reported any attacks on girls or women to the Ministry of the Interior. The relevant administrative units within the Ministry then ascertained whether the woman concerned was pregnant and what types of injuries had been inflicted. Her parents or guardians were summoned and, if no crime had been committed, an administrative settlement was usually reached and measures were taken to prevent any threat of an honour killing.

50. Acts constituting an assault on racial grounds were subject to the normal criminal procedures. A complaint could be filed with the police, the National Human Rights Centre or any other competent body. The Public Prosecution Service would then conduct an investigation to assess its validity and if it found sufficient evidence to charge the perpetrator, criminal proceedings would be instituted. He had no precise figures, but there had certainly been a number of convictions for incitement to confessional or racial strife.

51. **Mr. Al Museimi** (Jordan) said that the Human Rights and Family Affairs Department at the Ministry of Justice was responsible for promoting best practices in order to prevent domestic violence. There were family wings in various courts for women or child victims of violence. Social workers looked after them and specially trained judges dealt with cases of domestic violence. The victims, especially minors, gave evidence through closed circuit television so that they were not required to come into contact with the perpetrator. Psychological counselling was also provided, as well as support for rehabilitation.

52. **Mr. Thornberry** asked whether there were any social or legal implications for a person who converted from one religion to another.

53. Noting that the King was required to endorse the selection of the Commissioner-General of the National Human Rights Centre, he asked whether the King's role was merely a legal formality.

54. He enquired about the role played by education in preventing honour killings.

55. Lastly, he asked whether non-nationals enjoyed the right to strike.

56. **Mr. Saidou** asked whether the National Human Rights Centre and the Office of the Ombudsman were accessible to people throughout the country, for instance through local representatives.

57. A number of sources had commented on the practice of lengthy administrative detention, which was contrary to article 5 (b) of the Convention. He asked whether any action had been taken to address that issue.

58. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** commended the State party on its policy of welcoming refugees and asylum-seekers. He asked, however, whether the economic and financial crisis

had adversely affected the attitude of Jordanian citizens and whether it had led, for instance, to an increase in hate crimes.

59. Noting that 12 parliamentary seats had been reserved for women, he asked what proportion of the total number of seats that figure represented.

60. According to paragraph 28 of the report, article 2 of the Regular Courts Act (No. 17 of 2001), as amended, stipulated that the ordinary courts should exercise jurisdiction in all civil and criminal cases. However, some matters fell within the purview of religious or special courts. He asked whether the crime of racial hatred had been defined in Jordanian law and whether the special courts could try such cases.

61. **Mr. de Gouttes** enquired about the impact of the “Arab Spring” on the influx of refugees and asylum-seekers. Referring to the delegation’s comment that about 80,000 Syrians had fled to Jordan and that some were currently residing in camps, he asked how the camps were organized. He further noted that the country lacked sufficient resources to provide facilities for all the refugees. What measures were being taken to address that problem?

62. **Mr. Hyassat** (Jordan) said that his country had ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights without any reservation and that there was no clause in the Criminal Code applicable to religious conversion. However, certain issues admittedly arose in relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, for instance in the event of divorce, because marriage was based on a combination of civil and religious provisions. A woman was entitled to apply for a divorce if her husband converted to another religion and a father was entitled to disinherit his son. Such matters would no doubt be discussed with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief when he visited the country.

63. He confirmed that His Majesty the King’s endorsement of the selection of the Commissioner-General of the National Human Rights Centre was a formality. However, the submission of decrees for ratification also constituted a safeguard. For instance, the King never endorsed a decree concerning capital punishment so that there was a de facto moratorium on the death penalty.

64. Both nationals and non-nationals had the right to strike.

65. The exonerating clause concerning honour crimes had been deleted from the Criminal Code and no mitigating circumstances had been recognized since 2010. Her Majesty the Queen of Jordan had participated in a demonstration some years previously calling for an end to such heinous acts.

66. He acknowledged that there were some legal shortcomings in the case of administrative detention. However, the legislation would shortly be aligned with international human rights law. A bill currently being drafted would limit a governor’s competence to detain a person and would provide for safeguards, such as the right to appear before a court. The aim was to limit the use and duration of administrative detention and to permit such detention only where there were reasonable grounds to believe that public safety and law and order might be jeopardized. Most of those affected were recidivists. At any rate, all legislation was continuously reviewed in the light of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the law permitting administrative detention would be repealed when circumstances permitted. The Constitutional Court also considered claims that certain laws were incompatible with the Constitution.

67. The financial crisis, which had led to a sharp rise in prices, especially of electricity and oil, was affecting the Government’s ability to provide the requisite facilities for refugees. However, burden-sharing was an important pillar of international refugee law and the international community was, in principle, bound to help any country facing such difficulties. There was a centre rather than a camp for Syrian refugees who were former

members of the armed forces. About 100 refugees were currently accommodated in the centre.

68. **Mr. Sukayri** (Jordan) said that the Commissioner-General of the National Human Rights Centre was selected by the Centre's Board of Directors, whose members included human rights experts, legal experts and prominent individuals renowned for their integrity. The Centre was so independent that it had recently criticized certain ministers and Government departments for their conduct in the area of human rights. The minimum quota for women in the House of Representatives was 12 seats, which represented 10 per cent of the total. Of course, there was no ceiling on the number of seats to which women could be elected, and one woman had been elected to an additional seat in the latest elections.

69. **Mr. Al Museimi** (Jordan) said that ordinary courts dealt with most criminal and civil cases. However, some cases pertaining to personal status or inheritance were linked to religious beliefs. The religious courts had jurisdiction with respect to all religious denominations. Civilians could only be tried in civilian courts by civilian judges. The competence of the State Security Court was therefore strictly limited. Moreover, its decisions could be appealed to the Court of Cassation, which was an ordinary court.

70. There was no specific provision in the Criminal Code dealing with hate crimes or racial hatred. However, in such cases the articles referring to discrimination based on race, colour, gender or other status could be invoked.

71. On 28 October 2010, the Higher Criminal Court had handed down a sentence of 15 years of hard labour for a man who had murdered a 17-year-old girl in a fit of rage. Awareness and intent to carry out an act were core requirements for criminal responsibility. In the absence of full awareness or intent, mitigating circumstances could be invoked to reduce the penalty, but "honour" could not be invoked for that purpose. When it was proved in court that a perpetrator had committed an act of aggression that corresponded to the elements of crime laid down in the Criminal Code, the person concerned would be punished in accordance with the law.

72. **Mr. Sukayri** (Jordan) said that the 80,000 Syrians who had entered Jordan as a result of the "Arab Spring" could not, technically speaking, be characterized as refugees because most of them had joined relatives belonging to the large Syrian community already resident in Jordan. Others had entered as visitors, since there were no visa formalities between the two countries. However, their arrival had had a serious economic impact on a small country with limited resources. The refugees had been welcomed for humanitarian reasons and assistance was being provided by international organizations, such as UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and NGOs. Jordan also hoped to receive assistance from donor States to relieve the pressure on the country's resources and infrastructure. In terms of water resources, for example, Jordan was among the 10 poorest countries in the world.

73. **Mr Thornberry** said that, while there was clear evidence of progress in Jordan, the Committee's concluding observations would identify the issues that remained to be addressed and the strategies that should be further developed.

74. **Mr. Sukayri** (Jordan) said that Jordan was a tolerant country and for that reason it was also homogeneous, since many of the minorities had successfully assimilated into society. He acknowledged, however, that discrimination still occurred, both among Jordanians and between them and non-nationals. The Government was doing its utmost to eliminate such discrimination and its impact on society. He assured the Committee that the Government would carefully study and implement its recommendations.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.