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Human Rights Committee

Concluding observations on the initial report of Pakistan*

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Pakistan (CCPR/C/PAK/1) at its 3386th, 3387th and 3388th meetings (see CCPR/C/SR.3386, 3387 and 3388), held on 11 and 12 July 2017. At its 3406th and 3407th meetings, held on 25 and 26 July 2017, it adopted the present concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the initial report of Pakistan, despite it being four years overdue, and the information presented therein. It expresses appreciation for the opportunity to engage in a constructive dialogue with the State party's high-level delegation on the measures taken by the State party to implement the provisions of the Covenant since its entry into force. The Committee is grateful to the State party for its written replies (CCPR/C/PAK/Q/1/Add.1) to the list of issues (CCPR/C/PAK/Q/1), which were supplemented by the oral responses provided by the delegation.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the following legislative, institutional and policy measures taken by the State party:

(a) The Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offences in the Name or on pretext of Honour) Act, adopted in 2016;

(b) The Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offences Relating to Rape) Act, adopted in 2016;

(c) The National Action Plan on Human Rights, adopted in 2016;

(d) The National Commission for Human Rights Act, adopted in 2012, and the National Commission for Human Rights established thereunder, in 2015.

4. The Committee also welcomes the ratification of, or accession to, the following international instruments by the State party:

(a) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2011;

(b) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, in 2011;

(c) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, in 2016.

* Adopted by the Committee at its 120th session (3-28 July 2017).



C. Principal matters of concern and recommendations

Applicability of the Covenant

5. The Committee is concerned that the rights enshrined in the Covenant are not given full effect in the domestic legal order and that courts have, in certain cases, proved reluctant to apply the Covenant (art. 2).

6. **The State party should take all measures necessary to ensure that the Covenant rights are given full effect in its domestic legal order and to ensure that these rights are applied by the domestic courts at all levels, including through enhancing training for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and public officials in relation to the Covenant.**

Reservations

7. The Committee welcomes the fact that the State party withdrew a number of reservations in 2011 and has narrowed its reservations to articles 3 and 25. However, it regrets that the State party maintains its reservations to articles 3 and 25, which limit the application of these articles only to the extent that they are in conformity with Muslim personal law and the Law on evidence, and with some provisions of the Constitution, respectively.

8. **The State party should consider withdrawing its remaining reservations to articles 3 and 25 with a view to ensuring the full and effective application of the Covenant.**

National human rights institution

9. While welcoming the establishment of the National Commission for Human Rights in 2015, the Committee is concerned that the Chairman of the Commission reportedly did not receive the required authorization to travel to Geneva to meet with the Committee and that there are indications that the Commission is not fully independent. The Committee is also concerned that, according to its constitutive status, the Commission is prevented from fully cooperating with United Nations human rights mechanisms, cannot inquire into the practices of the intelligence agencies and is not authorized to undertake full inquiries into reports of human rights violations by members of the armed forces (art. 2).

10. **The State party should adopt all legislative, policy and institutional measures necessary to ensure that the National Commission for Human Rights is able to carry out its mandate fully and in an effective and independent manner, and in full conformity with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). The State party should strengthen the power of the Commission and ensure that it is able to investigate all allegations of violations of rights recognized in the Covenant committed by any official entity, including those allegedly committed by members of the intelligence agencies or armed forces. The State party should also strengthen its efforts to provide the Commission with sufficient financial and human resources to carry out activities throughout the territory of the State party.**

Non-discrimination

11. The Committee is concerned that the non-discrimination provisions adopted by the State party, including articles 25 to 27 of the Constitution, do not afford protection against discrimination on all the grounds prohibited under the Covenant. It is also concerned that same-sex relations between consenting adults are criminalized. While welcoming the information about progress made in the State party on the situation of intersex persons, the Committee regrets the absence of information from the delegation on effective measures to prevent and punish all forms of discriminations against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (arts. 2, 3 and 26).

12. **The State party should take all necessary measures, including the adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, to ensure that its legal framework:**

(a) Provides full and effective protection against discrimination in all spheres, including the private sphere, and prohibits direct, indirect and multiple discrimination;

(b) Includes a comprehensive list of grounds for discrimination, including colour, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity or other status;

(c) Provides for effective remedies in cases of violation. It should also decriminalize same-sex relations between consenting adults.

Violence against women and domestic violence

13. The Committee is concerned that, despite efforts made by the State party, violence against women is still prevalent. It is particularly concerned that so-called honour killings continue to occur; that the *qisas* (equal retaliation) and *diyat* (financial compensation) laws are reportedly applied to some of these cases, and that some tribal councils in remote areas continue to exercise jurisdiction over these cases. It is also concerned that, despite the adoption of the anti-rape law, effective access to justice for victims of rape has reportedly not been enhanced as expected, as no mechanisms have been put in place to implement the special procedures for court hearings. It is further concerned by the very low level of reporting of violence against women, including domestic violence; the lack of prompt and effective investigation of such cases; the low level of prosecution and conviction of perpetrators; and the insufficient level of assistance for victims (arts. 2, 3, 6, 7, 24 and 26).

14. The State party should continue its efforts to:

(a) Expedite the adoption of laws relating to violence against women that are under consideration at the federal and provincial levels and ensure they comply with international human rights standards;

(b) Effectively enforce the anti-honour killings and anti-rape laws and other relevant laws criminalizing violence against women and domestic violence, and monitor their enforcement throughout the territory;

(c) Enforce the prohibition of the application of *qisas* and *diyat* laws to so-called honour-related crimes and continue to regulate and supervise the tribal councils;

(d) Encourage the reporting of violence against women, inter alia by informing women of their rights as well as the legal and other services that exist through which they can receive protection and compensation;

(e) Ensure that cases of violence against women and domestic violence are promptly and thoroughly investigated and that perpetrators prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offences;

(f) Ensure that victims receive the necessary legal, medical, financial and psychological support and have access to effective remedies and means of protection;

(g) Ensure that judges, prosecutors and law enforcement authorities continue to receive appropriate training that equips them to deal with cases of violence against women and domestic violence effectively and in a gender-sensitive manner; and increase the number of female police officers and specialized units dealing with such cases to an adequate level.

Voluntary termination of pregnancy and maternal mortality

15. The Committee is concerned that abortion remains criminalized except to save the life of the woman or provide “necessary treatment”; that the circumstances under which voluntary termination of pregnancy is allowed are not clearly defined or widely understood among medical professionals or the general public; consequently, that a very large number of women seek unsafe abortions, which may put their lives and health at risk; and that there is a high level of resulting maternal mortality. The Committee is also concerned by the very

high rate of unintended pregnancy owing to limited access to information and services regarding sexual and reproductive health (arts. 2, 3, 6, 7, 17 and 26).

16. The State party should review its legislation to ensure that legal restrictions do not prompt women to resort to unsafe abortions that may endanger their lives and health. It should also take all measures necessary to combat the stigma associated with abortion; ensure the provision of safe voluntary termination of pregnancy by trained medical providers; ensure ready and affordable access to post-abortion health-care services throughout the country; and improve access to affordable contraception and sexual and reproductive health education and services, including for adolescents and disadvantaged women and girls in rural areas.

Death penalty

17. The Committee notes with concern that the State party lifted its moratorium on the death penalty in December 2014 and that, since then, it has been one of the States with the highest rates of executions. It is particularly concerned that the death penalty is applied to crimes other than the “most serious crimes” within the meaning of article 6 (2) of the Covenant, such as drug trafficking and blasphemy; that juveniles and persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities are reportedly sentenced to death and executed; that a policy of blanket refusal of clemency applications is allegedly in place and no clemency applications have been granted; and that executions are allegedly carried out in a manner that constitutes torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment. It also notes with concern the large number of Pakistani migrant workers who have been sentenced to death and executed overseas and the reportedly insufficient consular and legal services made available to them (arts. 2, 6, 7, 9, 14 and 24).

18. The State party should reinstate the moratorium and consider abolishing the death penalty and acceding to the second Optional Protocol to the Covenant. If the death penalty is maintained, the State party should, as a matter of priority, take all measures necessary to ensure that:

(a) **The death penalty is provided only for the “most serious crimes” involving intentional killing; it is never mandatory; pardon or commutation of the sentence is available in all cases, regardless of the crime committed; and it is never imposed in violation of the Covenant, including in the absence of fair trial procedures, and is not imposed by military courts, in particular against civilians;**

(b) **No person who was below 18 years of age at the time of the commission of an offence is subjected to the death penalty and those charged with a capital offence have access to an effective and independent age determination process, and are treated as children if doubts remain about their age at the time of the crime;**

(c) **No one with serious psychosocial or intellectual disabilities is executed or sentenced to death, including by establishing an independent mechanism to review all cases where there is credible evidence that prisoners who are facing the death penalty have such disabilities and reviewing the mental health of death row inmates;**

(d) **The execution protocol is in line with international human rights standards and executions are carried out in accordance with the established protocol;**

(e) **Pakistani migrant workers sentenced to death overseas are provided with sufficient legal and consular services throughout their legal proceedings.**

Enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killings

19. The Committee is concerned by the high incidence of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings allegedly perpetrated by the police and military and security forces; the absence of explicit criminalization of enforced disappearances in domestic law; the Actions (in Aid of Civil Power) Regulation, 2011, which provides for detention by the army without warrants or judicial supervision and indefinite detention in military internment centres, and the allegedly high number of persons held in secret detention under the Regulation. It is also concerned by reports that the families of disappeared persons are subjected to threats and intimidation to discourage them from filing cases of enforced

disappearance; by the lack of prompt and effective investigation and the very low rate of prosecution and conviction of perpetrators; and by the inadequate remedies and reparation provided for victims and their families. While welcoming the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, the Committee remains concerned by the insufficient power and resources allocated to the Commission; the non-compliance with the Commission's orders by the relevant authorities; and the high number of cases brought before the Commission that remain unresolved, with no criminal proceedings brought against perpetrators (arts. 2, 6, 7, 9, 14 and 16).

20. The State party should criminalize enforced disappearance and put an end to the practice of enforced disappearance and secret detention. It should also review the Actions (in aid of Civil Power) Regulation, 2011 with a view to repealing it or bringing it into conformity with international standards. It should also ensure that all allegations of enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killings are promptly and thoroughly investigated; all perpetrators are prosecuted and punished, with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crimes; families of disappeared persons and their lawyers and witnesses are protected; and a mechanism is put in place for full and prompt reparation for victims and their families. It should further strengthen the authority and the capacity (financial and personnel) of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances so that the latter can function effectively.

Anti-Terrorism Act

21. While noting the State party's need to take measures to combat terrorism, the Committee remains concerned by the very broad definition of terrorism laid down in the Anti-Terrorism Act; by the Act's supremacy over other laws, including the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance, 2000, which enables the courts to try juveniles; by the power of the authorities to detain a person for up to one year; and by the admissibility of confessions made in police custody as evidence in court, provided for in section 21-H of the Act. It is also concerned by the extensive jurisdiction of antiterrorism courts and the huge backlog of cases, as well as the absence of procedural safeguards in court proceedings (arts. 2, 6, 7, 14 and 15).

22. The State party should review the Anti-Terrorism Act with a view to aligning the definition of terrorism provided in article 6 of the Act with international standards; removing the jurisdiction of the antiterrorism courts over juvenile offenders; repealing section 21-H of the Act; and establishing procedural safeguards in the Act and bringing the court proceedings into line with articles 14 and 15 of the Covenant to ensure fair trials. It should also take the measures necessary, acting in line with the Covenant, to reduce the existing backlog of cases.

Military courts

23. The Committee is concerned by the extension of the jurisdiction of military courts to cases transferred from the antiterrorism courts and to persons detained under the Actions (in Aid of Civil Power) Regulation. The Committee is also concerned that the courts have convicted at least 274 civilians, allegedly including children, in secret proceedings and sentenced 161 civilians to death. It is also concerned that some 90 per cent of convictions are based on confessions; that the criteria used for the selection of cases to be tried by these courts are not clear; that defendants are not given the right to appoint legal counsel of their own choosing in practice, nor an effective right of appeal to the civilian courts; and that the charges against the defendants, the nature of evidence and the written judgments explaining the reasons for conviction are not made public. The Committee is further concerned that the military courts have allegedly convicted at least five "missing persons" whose cases were being investigated by the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances (arts. 2, 6, 7, 9, 14 and 15).

24. The State party should (a) review the legislation relating to the military courts with a view to abrogating their jurisdiction over civilians and their authority to impose the death penalty and (b) reform the military courts to bring their proceedings into full conformity with articles 14 and 15 of the Covenant in order to ensure a fair trial.

Torture

25. The Committee is concerned that the domestic legislation fails to provide a definition of torture and to criminalize the practice in compliance with article 7 of the Covenant and other international standards; that torture is allegedly widely employed by the police, military and security forces and intelligence agencies; and that allegations of torture are not promptly and thoroughly investigated and perpetrators are rarely brought to justice (arts. 2, 7, 14 and 15)

26. **The State party should:**

(a) **Amend its laws to ensure that all elements of the crime of torture are prohibited in accordance with article 7 of the Covenant and stipulate sanctions for acts of torture that are commensurate with the gravity of the crime;**

(b) **Ensure prompt, thorough and effective investigation of all allegations of torture and ill-treatment, prosecute, punish the perpetrators, if convicted, with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offence and provide effective remedies for the victims, including rehabilitation;**

(c) **Ensure that confessions obtained by coercion are never admissible in legal proceedings;**

(d) **Take all measures necessary to prevent torture, including by strengthening the training of judges, prosecutors, the police and military and security forces.**

Deprivation of liberty

27. The Committee is concerned by the high level of overcrowding and reportedly inadequate conditions of detention in prison and at the high proportion of persons held on remand, some of whom reportedly were in pretrial detention for periods longer than the maximum sentence for the crime (arts. 6, 7, 9, 10).

28. **The State party should intensify its efforts to reduce prison overcrowding and improve the conditions of detention, particularly health care and hygiene. It should also take all measures necessary to ensure that pretrial detention is used solely as an exceptional measure and not for excessively long periods, in accordance with article 9 of the Covenant.**

Freedom of movement

29. The Committee notes that various lists exist to control entry into or exit from the State party and regrets the lack of information thereon, including the criteria or grounds for the listing, the process for listing or delisting names, and the safeguards available to prevent misuse of these lists. It is concerned that the Exit Control List is allegedly used to restrict the freedom of movement of dissenting persons and that the circumstances under which passports may be cancelled, impounded or confiscated are not stated in article 8 of the Passports Act (art. 12).

30. **The State party should review the Passports Act and other legislation and policies relating to the Exit Control List, the Black List, the Passport Control List and the Visa Control List with a view to bringing them into compliance with article 12 of the Covenant, and ensure that they do not restrict freedom of movement on unjustified grounds.**

Right to a fair trial and administration of justice

31. The Committee is concerned by the fact that the Constitution, federal laws and the jurisdiction of highest courts do not apply in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. It is also concerned by the challenges facing the judiciary in strengthening its independence and effectiveness, including the lack of transparency of judicial appointment procedures; the shortage of judges and long-term judicial vacancies; insufficient budget allocation; the considerable backlog of cases; the lack of high-quality legal education and continuing professional training for legal professionals; and corruption in the judiciary (art. 14).

32. **The State party should continue to review existing legislation on the administration of justice with a view to bringing it into compliance with the Covenant and international human rights standards, and take specific steps to ensure that the Constitution, federal laws and the jurisdiction of the highest courts are applied in the entire territory of the State party, including the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. It should also take all measures necessary to strengthen the independence, qualifications and effectiveness of the judiciary.**

Freedom of religion, conscience and belief

33. The Committee is concerned by the blasphemy laws, including sections 295 and 298 of the Pakistan Penal Code, that carry severe penalties, including the mandatory death penalty (sect. 295(C)), and reportedly have a discriminatory effect, particularly on Ahmadi persons (section 298 (B) and (C)); by the very high number of blasphemy cases based on false accusations and by violence against those accused of blasphemy, as illustrated by the case of Mashal Khan; and by repeated reports that judges who hear blasphemy cases are frequently harassed and subjected to intimidation and threats. While noting the judgment of the Supreme Court of 19 June 2014, the Committee regrets the absence of information on the implementation of that judgment, and remains concerned by the continued reports of hate speech and hate crimes against persons belonging to religious minorities and their places of worship and by the religiously biased content of textbooks and curricula in public schools and madrasas (arts. 2, 14, 18 and 19).

34. **The State party should:**

(a) **Repeal all blasphemy laws or amend them in compliance with the strict requirements of the Covenant, including as set forth in the Committee's general comment No. 34 (2011) on the freedoms of opinion and expression, para. 48;**

(b) **Ensure that all those who incite or engage in violence against others based on allegations of blasphemy, as well as those who falsely accuse others of blasphemy, are brought to justice and duly punished;**

(c) **Take all measures necessary to ensure adequate protection of all judges, prosecutors, lawyers and witnesses involved in blasphemy cases;**

(d) **Ensure that all cases of hate speech and hate crimes are thoroughly and promptly investigated and that perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished;**

(e) **Review school textbooks and curricula with a view to removing all religiously biased content, incorporate human rights education therein and continue to regulate madrasas;**

(f) **Fully implement the judgment of the Supreme Court of 19 June 2014.**

Right to privacy

35. While noting the State party's view that the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016 complies with the Convention on Cybercrime, the Committee is concerned that the Act provides for: (a) overbroad powers for the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority and authorized officers without sufficient independent judicial oversight mechanisms; (b) mandatory mass retention of traffic data by service providers for a minimum of one year; (c) unduly restrictive licensing requirements for network service providers; (d) the sharing of information and cooperation with foreign governments without judicial authorization or oversight (arts. 17 and 19).

36. **The State party should review its legislation on data collection and surveillance, in particular the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016, to bring it into line with its obligations under the Covenant. It should also establish independent oversight mechanisms for the implementation of the Act, including judicial review of surveillance activity; review its laws and practice of intelligence-sharing with foreign agencies to ensure its compliance with the Covenant; review all licensing requirements that impose obligations on network service providers to engage in communication**

surveillance, particularly in relation to indiscriminate data retention; and ensure that surveillance activities comply with the State party's obligations under the Covenant. It should further adopt a comprehensive data-protection law in line with international standards.

Freedom of expression

37. The Committee is concerned that defamation is criminalized and can be punished with imprisonment, and concerned by reports that criminal laws are improperly used against journalists and dissenting voices. It is also concerned by reports of the way in which the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority exercises its powers over the content of media outlets, including suspending over 20 programmes in the past four years; and the lack of clarity about procedural safeguards and oversight mechanisms to ensure that the Regulatory Authority exercises its powers in a way consistent with the principle of freedom of expression. It is further concerned, despite the measures taken by the State party, by repeated reports of disappearance, killing and intimidation of journalists, human rights defenders and lawyers by State and non-State actors and the low rate of prosecution and conviction of perpetrators (arts. 6, 7 and 19).

38. The State party should decriminalize defamation, and ensure that imprisonment is never a punishment for defamation and that criminal laws are not improperly used against journalists and dissenting voices. It should also review its legal provisions relating to freedom of expression, including article 19 of the Constitution, the rules applicable under the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Act 2007 and the code of conduct for programmes and advertisements for broadcast media and distribution services, with a view to putting in place effective oversight mechanisms and procedural safeguards and bringing these provisions into line with article 19 of the Covenant. Furthermore, it should promptly and thoroughly investigate all reported cases of harassment, disappearance and killing of human rights defenders, bring the perpetrators to justice and intensify its efforts to ensure a safe and favourable environment for the work of journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders.

Freedom of assembly and association

39. The Committee is concerned that the Policy for Regulation of International Non-Governmental Organizations in Pakistan may, contrary to its intention, constrict the registration of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and their activities. It is particularly concerned by the broad and vague grounds for cancellation of the registration of these organizations (arts. 18, 19 and 22).

40. The State party should review its legislation on the registration of international NGOs with a view to bringing it into line with article 22 of the Covenant.

Early marriage and forced marriage

41. The Committee is concerned that the minimum age for marriage is set differently for girls (16 years) and boys (18 years) in some provincial laws; that the practice of *ghag*, forced marriage and child marriage continues; and that a high number of victims of such practices have attempted or committed suicide (arts. 2 (2), 3, 6, 23 and 26).

42. The State party should ensure that the minimum age for marriage is set at 18 years for both girls and boys; intensify its efforts to eradicate forced marriage and related harmful practices, including by carrying out prompt and effective investigations of all reported cases and prosecuting those responsible, if appropriate; and ensure that victims are provided with appropriate remedies and rehabilitation services.

Protection of children

43. The Committee is concerned, despite the efforts made by the State party, by the low level of birth registration, which has adverse consequences for children. It is also concerned by the high number of children engaged in labour under hazardous and slavery-like

conditions, particularly in the brick kiln industry and domestic settings, and the insufficient labour inspections of child labour. It is also concerned that perpetrators are rarely brought to justice and victims do not receive adequate assistance and rehabilitation services (arts. 2, 6, 7, 8, 24 and 26).

44. The State party should intensify its efforts to ensure that all children are registered at birth; identify children whose birth has not been registered and children without identity documents and register them; and raise awareness about the importance of birth registration. It should also take all measures necessary to put an end to child labour by rigorously enforcing the laws on child labour and strengthening labour inspection mechanisms.

Afghan refugees

45. The Committee commends the State party for hosting millions of Afghan refugees for many years and welcomes the adoption of the comprehensive policy on the voluntary repatriation and management of Afghan refugees and the State party's plan to conduct the registration of undocumented Afghans in August 2017. The Committee, however, remains concerned by the delay in adopting a national refugee law and by reports that Afghans in Pakistan, particularly those without documents, are exposed to arbitrary arrest, harassment and threats of deportation by the police and security forces (2, 7, 9 and 26).

46. The State party should carry out the registration of undocumented Afghan refugees as planned. It should expedite the adoption of national refugee law in compliance with international human rights and humanitarian standards. It should also investigate all allegations of abuse against refugees by the police and security forces, while taking all measures necessary to prevent such abuses.

Right to participate in public affairs

47. While noting the adoption of quotas for women and minority persons in the national and provincial parliaments and in public services and quotas for persons with disabilities in public services, the Committee is concerned that the minority quota is applied only to religious minorities, and regrets the absence of sufficient information on the implementation of these quotas. It is also concerned by the removal of Ahmadis from the general electoral list and their registration on a separate voting list, the low level of exercise of the right to vote by women and remaining obstacles to effective access to voting for persons with disabilities and persons belonging to minorities, including gypsies (arts. 2, 25, 26 and 27).

48. The State party should review its regime of temporary special measures, including quotas for minorities, to ensure that they apply to all persons belonging to religious, cultural and ethnic minorities and ensure that every citizen, on general terms of equality, is able to effectively participate in the conduct of public affairs and have access to public services. The State party should improve the election system and procedures with a view to ensuring that all voters are included on electoral lists and that all citizens can exercise their right to vote without obstacles.

D. Dissemination and follow-up

49. The State party should widely disseminate the Covenant, its initial report, the written replies to the Committee's list of issues and the present concluding observations with a view to raising awareness of the rights enshrined in the Covenant among the judicial, legislative and administrative authorities, civil society and NGOs operating in the country, and the general public. The State party should ensure that the report and the present concluding observations are translated into the official language of the State party.

50. In accordance with rule 71, paragraph 5, of the Committee's rules of procedure, the State party is requested to provide, within one year of the adoption of the present concluding observations, information on the implementation of the recommendations made

by the Committee in paragraphs 18 (death penalty), 20 (enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killings) and 34 (freedom of religion, conscience and belief) above.

51. The Committee requests the State party to submit its next periodic report by 28 July 2020 and to include in that report information on the implementation of the recommendations made in the present concluding observations. The Committee also requests the State party, in preparing the report, to broadly consult civil society and NGOs operating in the country, as well as minority and marginalized groups. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/268, the word limit for the report is 21,200 words. Alternatively, the Committee invites the State party to agree, within one year of the adoption of the present concluding observations, to use its simplified reporting procedure, whereby the Committee transmits a list of issues to the State party prior to the submission of its periodic report. The State party's replies to that list will constitute its next periodic report to be submitted under article 40 of the Covenant.
