



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Distr.: General
9 July 2019

Original: English

Human Rights Committee 126th session

Summary record of the 3612th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 3 July 2019, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Shany (Vice-Chairperson)

later: Mr. Fathalla

Contents

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant
(*continued*)

Third periodic report of Tajikistan (continued)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.

GE.19-11253 (E) 080719 090719



* 1 9 1 1 2 5 3 *

Please recycle The recycling symbol, consisting of three chasing arrows forming a triangle.



In the absence of Mr. Fathalla, Mr. Shany, Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant
(continued)

Third periodic report of Tajikistan (CCPR/C/TJK/3; CCPR/C/TJK/Q/3 and Add.1)
(continued)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Tajikistan took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Rahmon** (Tajikistan), replying to questions about individual cases, said that Zayd Saidov had been found guilty of bribe taking, embezzlement, unlawful deprivation of liberty, rape of a minor, polygamy, misappropriation of State funds in the amount of 34 million somoni, large-scale money laundering and falsification of documents. The court's verdict was based on a large body of evidence and testimonies and was entirely lawful. The Committee's recommendation to repeal the sentence was devoid of a legal basis under Tajik legislation.
3. Mahmadali Hayit had been sentenced to life imprisonment on 2 June 2016 on the basis of evidence presented during the trial. Throughout the proceedings, Mr. Hayit had had access to counsel, the allegations of torture and ill-treatment were baseless; the court's verdict was lawful and there were no grounds for his release.
4. Buzurgmehr Yorov had been convicted of embezzlement, fraud, falsification of documents, incitement to racial and ethnic hatred and public calls for violent regime change. The guilty verdict was based on evidence, testimony and medical reports presented to the court and the defendant had been in contact with his lawyer and family throughout the proceedings. The trial proceedings had been public and attended by representatives of international organizations, diplomatic missions and the media.
5. His Government had provided detailed information about the circumstances, investigations and prosecutorial proceedings relating to the deaths in custody of Ismonboy Dzhuraboevich Boboev, Kurbon Manonov, Nozim Odinaevich Tashripov and Tolibjon Dustov in its written replies to the list of issues (CCPR/C/TJK/Q/3/Add.1, paras. 147–160).
6. **Mr. Furuya** reiterated the Committee's concern over presidential resolutions Nos. 325 and 328, which prohibited recognized asylum seekers and refugees from living in certain urban areas and provided for penalties for non-compliance, such as rejection of registration of asylum claims, revocation of refugee status and deportation. The Committee had been informed that, during an identity check carried out by State security officers in December 2017, 377 refugees had had their State-issued identity documents confiscated and their refugee status revoked. It was unclear how resolution 325 contributed to its purported objective of maintaining public order and security in urban areas and why the restrictions only applied to refugees and asylum seekers, and not to other categories of foreign citizens. Clarification was required with regard to the resolution's compatibility with article 12 of the Covenant and article 26 of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, as well as the measures taken by the State party to uphold the principle of non-refoulement.
7. The Committee was concerned over reports that asylum seekers were placed in detention – although State party legislation granted immunity from prosecution to persons entering illegally to exercise their right to claim asylum – and subsequently deported, rather than granted access to asylum procedures. The delegation should elaborate on the measures taken to ensure that the Tajik border control authorities complied with the law. He wished to know whether immigration detention was applied as a rule or following individual assessments and, if the latter was true, which criteria applied.
8. The Committee was also concerned that, notwithstanding the launch of a two-year judicial reform programme in 2015, there appeared to be a persistent lack of transparency in the selection, appointment, suspension and removal of judges and no financial independence of the courts. Could the delegation provide detailed information on the

measures taken by the State party to achieve real independence of the judiciary and describe the core strategies and objectives of the most recent judicial reform programme? Despite the adoption of a framework for the provision of free legal assistance in 2015, and the State party's stated intention to fund the project, the system continued to rely on international donors rather than allocations from the State budget. It would be useful to know what the State party had done to implement the framework for free legal assistance in practice. Information about the measures taken to address the persistent shortage of lawyers, in particular in rural areas, would also be appreciated.

9. The Committee was further concerned over persistent reports of harassment, intimidation and pressure on lawyers representing defendants in politically sensitive cases or cases related to national security and counter-terrorism, including that of the five human rights lawyers referred to in paragraph 16 of the list of issues. He failed to understand how that situation was compatible with article 14 of the Covenant and would welcome information about the measures taken by the State party to ensure that lawyers could carry out their duties without fearing reprisals.

10. *Mr. Fathalla took the Chair.*

11. **Ms. Kran** said that, in the light of the reported failure to grant members of opposition groups equality of arms in judicial proceedings, it would be useful to know what was being done to ensure that those individuals were not punished for exercising their civil and political rights. It appeared that courts were often biased in favour of the prosecution, which would explain the extremely low acquittal rates. Could the delegation describe the practical measures taken to ensure equality of arms regardless of a defendant's political affiliation? She enquired whether there was an independent oversight body that received complaints of judicial prejudice and requested data on cases where judges had been reprimanded for unfairly privileging the prosecution. It had been brought to the Committee's attention that high-ranking governmental court officials sometimes publicly proclaimed defendants guilty prior to the trial, notably in politically motivated proceedings, and she wished to know what actions had been taken against those individuals, and against the practice of prejudicing court proceedings in general.

12. Given the recurrent reports of detention, lengthy imprisonment and violation of due process rights of opposition leaders, it would be useful to learn about steps taken by the Government to end the practice of arbitrary detention of government critics, as requested by the Committee in its concluding observations on the second periodic report of Tajikistan (CCPR/C/TJK/CO/2) in 2013. The delegation should provide data for the past six years on acquittal rates for criminal defendants who had publicly criticized the Government, belonged to an opposition group or who, as lawyers, had defended members of such groups. Information on pending cases would also be appreciated. It would further be helpful to know whether reports of torture, abuse and deaths of members of the banned Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) in detention were duly investigated and to obtain information on the outcome of such investigations. Could the delegation explain the rationale behind excluding the public from trials – or portions of trials – of IRPT members that did not concern matters relating to national security? The delegation might also wish to indicate to what extent court decisions and their reasoning were publicly accessible.

13. The current dialogue was not an appropriate forum to reopen discussions concerning the case of Mr. Zaid Saidov. The Views adopted by the Committee under article 5 (4) of the Optional Protocol concerning communication No. 2880/2015 continued to apply and should be given full effect by the State party.

14. Given the requirement for lawyers to renew their licences with the recently established Qualifying Commission, which was attached to the Ministry of Justice, clarification was needed about the way in which the independence of bar associations and lawyers was guaranteed. It would also be useful to know how effective access to justice was guaranteed in the light of the drastic reduction in the number of licensed lawyers that had resulted from the new procedure.

15. In the light of alarming reports about harassment and imprisonment of members of opposition groups, she wished to know what the State party intended to do to ensure citizens' right to vote and run for office, as provided in article 25 of the Covenant. She

requested extensive, detailed information about the composition of the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda and mechanisms in place to ensure its independence. The delegation should also elaborate on any plans to create an independent elections complaints mechanism and steps taken to implement and enforce equal campaign conditions for all political parties.

16. **Ms. Sancin** said that Presidential Decree No. 765 of November 2016 and the Operative and Search Activity Act of July 2017 gave rise to concerns about the possibility for arbitrary interference in individuals' private lives. The Committee had received reports that citizens were being surveilled, fined, punished and even imprisoned for visiting undesirable websites or posting inappropriate comments. However, no definition of "undesirable websites" was given in either piece of legislation. Moreover, it seemed that security agencies could monitor all Internet traffic. She would appreciate information on the safeguards in place to prevent arbitrary interference as well as the specific mechanisms implemented to ensure that citizens' rights to privacy and confidentiality under the Operative and Search Activity Act were upheld.

17. The Committee would welcome statistical data on the number of complaints filed by citizens alleging violations of their rights or freedoms, and the number of claims that had resulted in compensation awards. She would like to know what safeguards were in place to ensure that the principles of necessity and proportionality were respected when measures infringing the rights and freedoms of citizens were applied in practice. It would be helpful if the delegation could comment on how it perceived the interception of communications and retrieval of data without a court order to be compatible with the Covenant.

18. In relation to paragraph 21 of the list of issues, she had not heard responses regarding how the State considered its control of the media, the periodical blocking of international news platforms and other websites and the requirement to obtain official approval for any book brought into or taken out of the country to be compatible with the Covenant. It would be helpful if the delegation could comment on reports that requests for information from members of the public were not being answered promptly by the authorities.

19. In the light of the fact that articles 137 and 330 of the Criminal Code prescribed a maximum penalty of 5 years' imprisonment for defamation or insult of the President or State officials, she would appreciate an explanation of how Mr. Umar Murodov had been sentenced to imprisonment for 5 years and 6 months in August 2018 for insulting the President on social media.

20. The Committee was concerned at reports that independent journalists and media workers were being harassed and disproportionately sanctioned for reporting critically on State policies. It would be useful to hear about the measures taken to address the lack of independence of the broadcasting and licensing authorities. Lastly, she would welcome information on the measures under way to revise the restrictions on the exercise of freedom of peaceful assembly set out in the Public Meetings, Demonstrations and Rallies Act of 2014.

21. **Mr. Ben Achour** said that, given that article 1 of the Constitution stated that Tajikistan was a secular State, he would be interested to know the justification for the practically systematic intervention of the State in many aspects of religious life, including the appointment of imams, the control of religious books and documents, the requirement to receive State authorization in order to study in religious institutions abroad and the ban on individuals under 18 years of age from entering mosques. He would like to hear the delegation's views on whether the rules governing the registration of religious associations, the bans on certain religious garments and the restrictions on certain religious minorities were in line with the Covenant's two fundamental principles of necessity and proportionality.

22. He had not heard the delegation explain the compatibility with the Covenant of the ban on religious and ethnicity-based political parties, introduced by the constitutional amendments of 2016.

23. The country's former leading opposition party, the Islamic Renaissance Party, had been declared a terrorist organization and outlawed in September 2015 following its participation in an armed rebellion. However, the peaceful political movement Group 24 had suffered the same fate and been declared "extremist" by the Supreme Court. Several of its members had been targeted, including Mr. Safarali Hasanov, who had been sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment, and Mr. Ehson Odinaev, whose family believed he had been the victim of an enforced disappearance. He would welcome further information about the cases of Mr. Firdavs Mukhiddinov and Mr. Farhod Karimov, as well as that of Mr. Umedjon Salikhov, who had been sentenced to 17 years and 6 months of imprisonment. He would appreciate information on the extent to which those prosecutions and sentences conformed to articles 9, 14 and 25 of the Covenant, particularly in the light of reports received by the Committee that the families of the victims had been subjected to harassment.

24. **Ms. Pazartzis** said that the Committee did not wish to reopen cases that had already been brought before it. However, she wished to remind the delegation that once the Committee had determined a violation of a citizen's rights and recommended a State party to take measures of redress, it was up to the State party to consider those recommendations in view of its obligations under the Covenant and article 1 of the Optional Protocol. It would be helpful if the delegation could respond to specific reports and allegations alluded to by the Committee in order to help the Committee better understand the situation in the country. For example, in relation to the alleged travel ban on the family members of political opponents, she would welcome comments on the case of the daughter and mother of the exiled activist Shabnam Khudoydodova, who had been stopped and interrogated by security services on 4 August 2018. The individuals had eventually been allowed to leave the country, but only once the case had reached the attention of the international community.

25. The Committee was concerned at reports that, under the law on public associations, fines and closures had been imposed on a number of non-governmental organizations. She had heard the delegation state that there were around 3,000 civil society organizations in Tajikistan. She wondered how many of those were actively functioning, and how many were concerned with human rights. The Committee understood that further amendments to the law on public associations had recently been enacted that required all non-governmental organizations to publish annual financial reports on their income and expenses. It would be useful if the delegation could comment on how such limitations were compatible with the Covenant.

26. As the Committee had heard that a new law on non-commercial organizations, which would cover public foundations, was currently being drafted, it would be helpful if the State party could provide information on the proposed content of that law and how public foundations were defined.

27. She would be grateful for information on the measures taken to promote the participation of ethnic minorities in political life, as well as on the allegedly stringent language tests that existed for prospective political candidates. Data on the representation of ethnic minorities in parliament would also be useful.

The meeting was suspended at 11.05 a.m. and resumed at 11.30 a.m.

28. **Ms. Abdullozoda** (Tajikistan) said that Tajikistan, as a party to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, endeavoured to ensure that an appropriate legal framework was in place to regulate matters pertaining to refugees and asylum seekers. A national plan had been developed and adopted to respond to situations of mass refugee inflow, and areas had been designated for the construction of camps to house large numbers of refugees close to borders. Individuals without official refugee status were free to leave the country or take steps to regularize their situation.

29. With a view to maintaining security and public order, the Government had issued Decree No. 325 listing areas in which asylum seekers and refugees could not reside temporarily owing to the absence of the requisite infrastructure. However, foreign nationals who settled in areas where temporary stays were not permitted could nevertheless receive access to education, health care and employment. If circumstances required asylum seekers

and refugees to obtain special services, such as access to specialized hospitals, they could apply to the Refugee Status Commission, which convened monthly. In order to improve relations with asylum seekers and refugees and ensure the implementation of international legal instruments, the Government had, on 2 August 2004, adopted legislation to extend the areas in which asylum seekers and refugees were permitted to settle.

30. Individuals who enjoyed official refugee status were exempt from requiring authorization for employment and could therefore access jobs on an equal footing with citizens. Under legislation due to enter into force to guarantee the rights set out in the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, expulsion would no longer be one of the possible sanctions applicable to refugees and asylum seekers who violated the law.

31. Tajikistan applied the principles of non-refoulement, non-prosecution for illegal entry and international solidarity. Refugees entering Tajikistan must declare their intention to seek asylum, at which point their applications were registered and considered by the Refugee Status Commission, comprising representatives of various Government ministries and agencies. The Government had adopted a national strategy for border control to prevent refugees from being turned away at the border or sanctioned for crossing the border illegally. A procedure was also in place to divert refugees to the nearest department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs upon their entry into the country.

32. The State had, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), created an asylum system that met international standards. Workshops and training sessions were regularly held on the international standards that applied when working with asylum seekers, victims of human trafficking and other vulnerable groups. Refugees were interviewed, and their applications were considered individually. A centre to provide temporary accommodation for families and unaccompanied children who arrived in Tajikistan seeking asylum had recently been built with the help of the Danish Refugee Council.

33. Refugees in Tajikistan, many of whom were of Afghan origin, generally enjoyed a high quality of life and were not exposed to xenophobia. Children were educated in Tajik schools and older pupils benefited from classes and vocational training that facilitated their access to employment.

34. The Operative and Search Activity Act, as amended, empowered law enforcement agents to obtain electronic information for State security reasons, in view of the use of encrypted electronic messaging applications and other such tools for criminal activity.

35. **Ms. Nodiri** (Tajikistan) said that the Qualification Commission operated independently of the Ministry of Justice and comprised only members of the Union of Lawyers. Since its establishment in 2015, 87 licences to practise had been issued and 40 revoked, including 16 for involvement in criminal activity. A further 24 lawyers had voluntarily surrendered their licences. By July 2019, 205 legal offices, 23 legal consultancies and 18 lawyers' associations had been registered with the Ministry of Justice.

36. Under a pilot project, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme and the financial assistance of Switzerland, free legal assistance was being provided in 24 regions of the country. Since the project had begun, primary legal assistance had been provided to approximately 41,000 citizens, consisting of around 23,000 women and 18,000 men, including 1,100 persons with disabilities, through legal advice bureaus, field visits and other means; and secondary legal assistance had been provided to some 1,200 citizens, consisting of around 1,100 men and 100 women, including 200 or so minors.

37. The Government had taken a number of measures to promote the participation of ethnic minorities in political life. By law, ballot papers for election to the Assembly of Representatives and the National Assembly must be printed in both the official language and the majority language of the constituency concerned. In addition, several members of the district electoral commissions, the Assembly of Representatives and the National Assembly were Kyrgyz, Russian and Uzbek, and at least one deputy president of the two chambers must represent the Gorny Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast. While candidates for

election to both chambers must be proficient in Tajik, language testing did not curb the involvement of ethnic minorities.

38. As at 1 July 2019, around 2,000 NGOs had been established in Tajikistan, of which around 50 represented ethnic minorities. Legislation governing the activities of NGOs had recently been amended to ensure transparency and compliance with international commitments relating to anti-money-laundering and counter-terrorism-financing. Accordingly, NGOs were required to officially notify voluntary contributions and grants from abroad, although they did not need to seek permission in that regard. They were also expected to report information on their activities and funding on their own websites or, where that was not possible, to the Government for inclusion on the website of the registering body. Civil society had been actively involved in developing the system of reporting to the registering body.

39. **Mr. Sattotzoda** (Tajikistan) said that a programme on judicial reform for 2019–2021 had been approved by presidential decree in April 2019 with a view to further strengthening the judiciary and better protecting human rights and freedoms. The programme provided oversight of the implementation of legal acts and enhanced the quality and effectiveness of judicial activities. Information on the activities of the courts was made publicly available to help to ensure fair trials and increase public trust in the judiciary.

40. **Ms. Umarzoda** (Tajikistan) said that the national programme to combat AIDS incorporated provisions from decisions of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. Measures taken to halt the spread of HIV – including awareness-raising, needle exchanges and the provision of contraceptives – had helped to reduce morbidity rates among drug users and sex workers. An increase in the use of antiretroviral drugs had also led to lower mortality rates among persons with HIV and AIDS. A particular effort was being made to reduce mother-to-child transmission: almost 100 per cent of pregnant women with HIV received antiretroviral treatment. In collaboration with NGOs, drop-in centres and mobile clinics throughout the country were providing free screening to key population groups, including sex workers and migrants.

41. An intersectional working group established under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection held regular meetings on domestic violence and related issues. Extensive work to improve the legal basis for the prevention of domestic violence over the past two years had facilitated the provision of assistance to victims at social service centres. Professionals in the field were being trained to provide a rapid response to cases of domestic violence and standards of care had been established. Furthermore, four new drop-in centres for victims had been opened in late 2018. Organizations providing assistance to victims of violence and trafficking in persons had received 140,000 somoni from the State budget in 2019.

42. **Mr. Rahmon** (Tajikistan), in response to a question about the military operation carried out in Khorugh in July 2012, drew the Committee's attention to paragraphs 125 to 128 of the replies to the list of issues ([CCPR/C/TJK/Q/3/Add.1](#)).

43. Turning to the issue of the ban imposed on the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, he said that the Office of the Procurator General had collected irrefutable proof that members of the Party, together with former Deputy Minister of Defence, Abdukhalim Nazarzoda, had conspired in setting up more than 20 criminal groups with between 15 and 30 members, each with a view to violently seizing and retaining power and violently altering the constitutional order of Tajikistan. In September 2015, at the behest of Mr. Nazarzoda, a number of militants had attacked two military barracks, taken around 100 soldiers hostage and stolen firearms. According to a plan found in the offices of Party members, there was to be an armed attack on government buildings, law enforcement agency premises and national television channels. Leaflets had also been found containing public calls for extremist and terrorist activity in the territory of Tajikistan.

44. Claims that a former member of the Party had suffered torture at the hands of law enforcement personnel while being kept in solitary confinement were unfounded. Charges had been brought against some members of the Party, all of whom had been given immediate access to a lawyer of their choice. It had been determined that the trial before the Supreme Court should be conducted in closed hearings so as to ensure the confidentiality of legally protected State or other secrets and the safety of the parties to the proceedings, the

witnesses and their family members or close relatives. The proceedings had been carried out in line with national legislation at all times. On 2 June 2016, the Court had found all the defendants guilty and had sentenced them to custodial terms of various lengths, including life imprisonment.

45. **Mr. Ben Achour**, referring to paragraphs 263 to 265 of the replies to the list of issues, asked why it had been deemed necessary to draft a bill on alternative service, given that article 1 of the Universal Military Obligations and Military Service Act of 29 November 2000 already provided for the right to perform alternative service in place of military service. He also asked about the status of the bill and whether it would be adopted soon.

46. **Mr. Bulkan**, noting reports that, during the 2015 parliamentary elections, opposition politicians had been granted limited or no access to State-run television and minimal airtime to express their views, and that opposition parties' websites had been blocked, said that he wished to know whether the State party intended to ensure equal election campaign conditions for all political parties in future, and what concrete progress had been made in that regard since 2015.

47. **Ms. Kran** asked whether there was a process allowing political parties to refute allegations used to justify the imposition of government bans on them and said that she had heard no response to the request for an explanation of how the incarceration of opposition party members was compatible with the guarantees of political participation enshrined in the Covenant. She wished to know whether the Government would be open to reconsidering and implementing United Nations recommendations concerning incarcerated members of the opposition and, more generally, how it planned to promote political pluralism in Tajikistan in the future.

48. **Ms. Sancin** said that she would be grateful to receive statistics on the number of investigations into alleged ill-treatment in custody that had led to the prosecution and, in particular, conviction of State officials. She would also appreciate a description of the domestic laws and procedures that the International Committee of the Red Cross would be required to comply with in order to be permitted to monitor detention facilities in the State party.

49. **Mr. Furuya** asked whether article 335 (1) of the Criminal Code had been amended to exempt all asylum seekers from criminal responsibility for illegal border crossing and whether international organizations were afforded access to detention facilities for asylum seekers and to statistics on the numbers of asylum seekers and foreigners being held there.

50. **Mr. Santos Pais** asked whether the Public Prosecution Service in Tajikistan was independent from the executive branch.

51. **Mr. Muhumuza** asked whether the delegation could give assurances that exiled members of the opposition and their families would not be subjected to reprisals for cooperating or interacting with the Committee.

52. **Ms. Sancin** asked whether, in the interests of ensuring compliance with the Covenant, the mass surveillance of communications in the State party would be suspended until all regulatory aspects of the measure had been fully resolved.

53. **Mr. Rahmon** (Tajikistan) said that the Government had never resorted to reprisals against political opponents and did not intend to. Article 30 of the Constitution guaranteed the right to freedom of speech, press and opinion, which included the right to seek, obtain and disseminate all forms of information, a right that was also protected under the Press and Other Mass Media Act. According to figures from the Ministry of Culture, on 1 January 2019, there had been over 370 registered newspapers in Tajikistan, of which 264 had been independent; 245 magazines, of which 130 had been independent; and 10 information agencies, of which 9 had been independent.

54. The Press and Other Mass Media Act provided guarantees of press freedom. Under the Act, restrictions could be imposed on that freedom only in the interests of preserving public order and protecting the rights, freedoms and dignity of citizens, though restrictions could also apply to material that was of a violent or sexual nature, fuelled religious hatred

or incited subversion of the constitutional order. Such restrictions in no way contradicted international human rights laws. Regarding states of emergency, he drew the Committee's attention to paragraphs 30 to 32 of the replies to the list of issues.

55. Upon the recommendation of the Human Rights Council, on 4 July 2012, a law had been adopted to amend article 146 of the Criminal Code and decriminalize libel. Pursuant to the Civil Code, all citizens were entitled to bring claims for violations of their rights, honour or dignity before a court of law.

56. **Ms. Nodiri** (Tajikistan) said that minor irregularities that had occurred during the 2015 parliamentary elections had not affected the result, as confirmed by various international observer missions. The Central Commission for Elections and Referendums was developing mechanisms to prevent future violations of electoral laws, which stipulated that all parties and candidates should be treated equally and allowed to campaign freely. Candidates in elections were able to express their views on the political and socioeconomic situation in the country on a number of television channels, radio stations and non-governmental websites. In the build-up to the 2020 parliamentary elections, the Commission was giving airtime to all parties and candidates, and campaign posters had been standardized to ensure equality of treatment.

57. Earlier that year, on the instructions of the Office of the President, a working group had been established to draft a new version of the Universal Military Obligations and Military Service Act based on an analysis of relevant laws in other countries. At the recommendation of the human rights treaty bodies, and bearing in mind the experiences of other countries, consideration was being given to the inclusion of provisions on conscientious objection.

58. **Ms. Hasanzoda** (Tajikistan) said that, in the aftermath of the civil war that had affected her country from 1992 to 1997, the political leadership had successfully rebuilt civil, social and political life in accordance with secular principles. The Government had adopted several laws to regulate the activities of religious organizations, and the Committee for Religious Affairs had been set up.

59. Religious publications were not prohibited, but were monitored to ensure that they did not contain extremist material. The Government had produced brochures providing information on key religious issues and had published translations of classic Islamic texts, including the Qur'an. In 2009, events had been organized to celebrate the 1,310th anniversary of the birth of Abū Ḥanīfah, and official Islamic holidays had been included in the list of State holidays.

60. As a mother herself, she believed that minors should receive a secular education. The country was in need of highly qualified professionals, which meant that children had to receive a rigorous education from an early age. However, the act of praying was not prohibited, and there were many mosques throughout the country.

61. **Mr. Rahmon** (Tajikistan) said that his country would continue to ensure that it complied with the Covenant and all other international treaties to which it was a party.

62. **The Chair** said that he wished to thank the delegation for what had been a constructive dialogue. While the State party had made progress in a number of areas, there was room for further improvement, particularly with regard to the gathering of statistics, political pluralism and the practical implementation of legislation.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.