**STATEMENT**

**UPR47
Review of Norway**

**4 November 2024**

 **Opening statement delivered by State Secretary Even ERIKSEN, Ministry of Justice and Public Security**

*Check against delivery*

President/Vice-President, distinguished member and observer States of the Council,

It will be my pleasure to give you some highlights concerning the implementation of the recommendations received during the 3rd cycle, and an overview of progress on several important issues.

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Norway has since our previous dialogue implemented several recommendations regarding international human rights instruments. Some of the recommendations are now under consideration.

We received recommendations regarding the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances. This convention entered into force in 2019, and Norway has had our first hearing of our report.

We have also ratified the Domestic workers Convention (ILO 2011), in 2021.

We noted the recommendations to ratify the *Kampala* Amendment. The ratification is under consideration.

In our Government Platform 2021 – 2025 The Government has stated that we would incorporate *the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* into Norwegian law. In 2022 the Government appointed an expert committee to assess the consequences of incorporation. Their report was sent on public consultation this summer.

It is important to note that – regardless of incorporation - Norwegian law is to be interpreted in line with the convention.

The Convention, which was ratified in 2013, is already implemented in Norwegian Law through transformation into relevant national law provisions. Transformation is the most common way conventions are implemented in the Norwegian legal system.

For instance, prior to the ratification, the Norwegian Parliament adopted a new Guardianship Act that was developed to fulfil the requirements of the CRPD. The Act is currently subject to an ongoing review, with the aim of further strengthening the principle of self-determination and underlining that ordinary guardianship is a voluntary support measure.

Newly revised Instructions for Official Studies of Central Government Measures underlines that human rights considerations are assessed appropriately before decisions on central government measures are made.

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With respect to the protection of human rights more broadly, the Norwegian Constitution recognises democracy, the rule of law and human rights as societal cornerstones. I would also like to emphasise that the promotion of human rights is an essential component of our foreign policy and that we put strong emphasis on responsible business conduct abroad.

Since our last dialogue, Norway has strengthened our legal commitments on the area of *human rights and the business sector*. The Transparency Act, which entered into force 1 July 2022, regulates enterprises’ transparency and work on fundamental human rights and decent working conditions.

It states that Companies shall, in line with both OECD guidelines and UN principles, carry out due diligence concerning fundamental human rights and decent working conditions, both relating to their own business and to their supply chain. The companies are obliged to reply to information requests from the general public.

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President/Vice-President

Our legal system ensures the right to reparation and redress, both through civil action and in criminal cases, subject to reasonable statues of limitations.

When it comes tohuman rights violations of the *past*, the common approach in Norway involves the appointment of public committees or commissions which submit official reports on a given subject.

The Norwegian Parliament established in 2018 *the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* to investigate the assimilation policy and injustices committed against the Sami, Kvens/Norwegian Finns and Forest Finns. The Sámediggi and Kven/Norwegian-Finnish and Forest-Finnish organisations were involved in the Commission’s work.

The Commission submitted its report to the Parliament in June 2023. The Parliament will finish its deliberations on the report in a plenary meeting next week.

The representative from The Ministry of Municipalities and Local Development will address recommendations regarding the Sami and our 5 national minorities in his statement.

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President/Vice-President

Let me highlight a few other areas that the Norwegian Government deems particularly relevant for the present dialogue:

*Firstly*, I would like to draw the Council’s attention to recent developments in addressing *racism and discrimination*.

Norway has a strong commitment to combating racism and discrimination in all its forms. By continuously developing and strengthening our policies, we ensure that our measures are not only responsive to immediate needs, but also focus on long-term, sustained progress.

State Secretary Hagen will address this further in his statement.

*Secondly*, the fundamental right to *freedom from violence* for women and girls:

A new national plan against violence and abuse against children and domestic violence, was presented last year. The plan is developed by nine ministries in cooperation. It contains more than 100 measures. The plan will contribute to more targeted prevention, better help and protection of victims and more effective prosecution and treatment of perpetrators.

The plan contains a separate section on violence and abuse in Sami communities. This part of the plan has been developed in close collaboration with the Sámediggi.

Combating violence against children remains a high priority area. The Government has implemented several specific initiatives to protect children from violence.

To learn from shortcomings and to further develop the work of preventing severe intimate partner violence and partner *homicides*, the Government launched earlier this year a permanent national intimate partner homicide commission, which shall continuously review cases of intimate partner homicide.

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*Thirdly*, Children’s rights must be safeguarded in all matters concerning them. The *best interests of the child* shall always be a fundamental consideration in actions and decisions that affect children.

An example is the change that was made to the Police Act in June 2024. In line with the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, section 6 of the Police Act now states that when police perform their duty towards a child, or in the presence of a child, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

This principle is stated in several other laws that particularly affects children’s rights, including the new Norwegian *Child Welfare Act*. The new Act places greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention, while also enhancing the legal protections for both children and parents.

Currently, the Ministry of Children and Families is working on a Quality Reform in Child Welfare. The reform aims to tackle significant challenges in the child welfare sector. The representative from the Ministry will address this further in her statement.

*C*hildren shall be safe and protected in the digital domain. The government is currently working on a White Paper on Safe Digital upbringing, containing several measures to ensure children’s rights and quality of life in a digital everyday life. In this work, it is important to balance children’s right to protection against their right to information and to participation.

Technology offers many possibilities. At the same time, children’s rights might be challenged. In particular, this applies to personal, consumer and legal protection. We are now following up a comprehensive review of consumer protection for children in digital media. This entails tightening regulations and enforcement to strengthen consumer protection for children.

In cases regarding *adoption*, in June 2023, the Norwegian government set up an independent investigation of historical international adoptions. The committee will deliver its report by the end of 2025. The overall purpose is to obtain answers to whether there have been illegal or unethical circumstances in connection with foreign adoptions to Norway.

The government has also considered a temporary suspension of international adoptions while the investigation is ongoing, but decided to establish risk-reducing measures instead. Furthermore, the Norwegian authorities is conducting a review of all states of origin that Norway has a co-operation with.

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Regarding *imprisoning children and young offenders* who were under the age of 18 at the time of the offence, the threshold for this is high and imprisonment is only permitted when particularly required.

Children who are sentenced to an unconditional prison sentence serve, as a general rule, their sentence in one of the two established Youth units. For less severe crimes, Norway has a system for restorative justice by The Norwegian Mediation Service. The non-custodial sanctions are youth punishment and youth follow-up, and the parliament adopted in 2023 a number of improvements to the non-custodial sanctions for young offenders.

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*The fourth* point I would like to highlight is the new plan for *mental health*. Mental ill health is one of the biggest public health challenges in Norway. The Norwegian plan for mental health covers the entire population with a particular emphasis on children and young people. The plan increases allocations to mental health.

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President/Vice-President,

Norway was recently scrutinised by the *European Committee against Torture*.

The CPT did not find any physical ill-treatment of detained persons, prisoners or patients by staff in any of the establishments visited. Rather, the committee noted that the interaction between staff and the persons deprived of their liberty was calm and respectful.

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President/Vice-President,

My delegation and I look forward to further discussing these and other human rights issues this morning as we endeavour to address issues and questions raised by States.

Finally, I would like to restate the Norwegian Government’s principled and continuing commitment to human rights. We are proud of our contributions to human rights, both at home and abroad. At the same time, no country can claim a perfect record. We look forward to a constructive interactive dialogue on how to better protect and promote human rights in Norway.

Thank you.