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Russian Federation

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I. Methodology

1. The present national report has been prepared by the federal Ministry of Justice within the framework of the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review on the basis of materials agreed upon in the course of interdepartmental consultations between federal executive bodies, the Commissioner for Human Rights and the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights.
2. In addition, the report was prepared taking into account consultations with the State law-making bodies (the Federation Council and the State Duma of the Federal Assembly), the body exercising public oversight, in the form of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, and the practice of the country's supreme judicial bodies.
3. The report reflects the results of work to further strengthen the regulatory and structural framework for the promotion and protection of human rights and to implement the recommendations that it accepted under its voluntary commitments following the submission of its third national report.

II. Regulatory framework for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms

A. Constitutional guarantees and international human rights obligations (1–26, 115)

4. The Russian Federation is a democratic federal State, made up of equal constituent entities, based on the rule of law and with a republican form of government.
5. According to article 2 of the Constitution, human beings and their rights and freedoms are the supreme value. The recognition, observance and protection of human and civil rights and freedoms are the duty of the State. Chapter II of the Constitution is devoted to human and civil rights and freedoms and sets out a broad list of rights and freedoms subject to protection. The enumeration of fundamental rights and freedoms in the Constitution should not be interpreted as a negation or diminution of other universally recognized human and civil rights and freedoms. Fundamental human rights and freedoms are inalienable, are inherent in every person from birth and are directly applicable. Rights and freedoms shall be recognized and guaranteed in accordance with universally recognized rules and principles of international law and in accordance with the Constitution.
6. In accordance with the Constitution, the universally recognized rules and principles of international law and the international treaties ratified by the Russian Federation form an integral part of its legal system. If an international treaty establishes rules that differ from those provided for by its laws, the rules of the international treaty prevail.
7. The Russian Federation is a party to the vast majority of major international human rights treaties and further intends to gradually expand the range of its international human rights obligations, taking due account of the financial implications and the need to change domestic law and practice.
8. In 2018, the Russian Federation ratified the Convention on Social Security (Minimum Standards), 1952 (No. 102), of the International Labour Organization, which establishes international standards of basic social rights. In 2020, the Convention entered into force for the Russian Federation, which assumed obligations with regard to medical care and the provision of social security in connection with maternity, illness, disability, old age, loss of breadwinner, and also industrial accidents and occupational diseases.
9. As part of the gradual expansion of the State's international obligations, the government authorities are studying the prospects for participation in various international treaties.
10. In accordance with the action plan for the implementation of the fundamentals of State policy in the field of chemical and biological security for the period up to 2025 and beyond,

the issue of the prospects and expediency of accession to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity is under interdepartmental consideration.

11. The Russian Federation has not acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, but Russian legislation includes the necessary rules designed to reduce statelessness. The federal Citizenship Act, adopted in 2023, which will enter into force on 26 October 2023, preserves the continuity of the principle of reducing statelessness.

12. Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment is unnecessary, since the Russian Federation has a national system for monitoring the activities of institutions and bodies responsible for the enforcement of penalties, which is carried out by federal government bodies and voluntary associations.

13. The Russian Federation is not a party to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, as a number of its provisions are at variance with the rules of Russian legislation, fundamental approaches to the protection and promotion of traditional moral and family values and the road map for State family policy in the Russian Federation for the period until 2025. At the same time, the issues of combating violence against women are reflected in detail in domestic law and the practice of law enforcement agencies.

B. Legislative and institutional guarantees of human rights (41–43, 45, 47–56, 307–309, 145–148)

14. Human and civil rights and freedoms determine the purpose, content and application of laws and the activities of the legislature, the executive and local government bodies and are upheld by the courts.

15. The State authorities of the Russian Federation are continuing their sustained work to improve and strengthen mechanisms for the protection of human rights.

16. Human rights are protected by the legislative, executive and judicial authorities. The President of the Russian Federation is the guarantor of the Constitution of the Russian Federation and of human and civil rights and freedoms.

17. The Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation carries out work on the basis of incoming applications to verify the conformity of provisions of Russian law with the Constitution of the Russian Federation. During the reporting period, the Court issued rulings (determinations) on civil and political rights, the work of civil society institutions, freedom and personal inviolability, privacy, the exercise of economic, social and cultural rights, the protection of vulnerable categories of the population, the rights of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, the situation of foreign nationals, the administration of justice and the foundations of the judicial system, and health protection, including in the context of the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

18. The Russian Federation has approved the posts of Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights and Presidential Commissioner for the Protection of Entrepreneurs' Rights. The posts of commissioners for human rights, commissioners for children's rights and commissioners for entrepreneurs' rights may also be established in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Posts of commissioners for the rights of numerically small indigenous minorities have been established in some constituent entities. The institution of a financial commissioner has also been set in place: the Commissioner for the Rights of Consumers of Financial Services, who, on an independent basis, carries out the pretrial settlement of disputes between consumers of financial services and financial organizations. Interaction between civil society and government bodies is ensured by the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and other coordinating bodies, in particular, civic councils formed under federal executive authorities and heads of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

19. Extensive work has been carried out to further liberalize criminal legislation and render it more humane. In particular, legislative guarantees have been introduced to protect the rights of entrepreneurs against unjustified criminal prosecution and the application of measures of criminal procedural coercion. It has been established that the need for further investigative work cannot serve as the sole and sufficient grounds for extending the period of remand in custody.

20. The system of preventive measures has been diversified: measures not involving isolation from society (bail, house arrest) have been improved, and a new preventive measure has been introduced in the form of the prohibition of certain actions. The grounds for imposing a preventive measure on entrepreneurs in the form of remand in custody have been clarified and priority has been given to the application to them of preventive measures which enable them to continue their entrepreneurial activities.

21. During the reporting period, the system of exemption from criminal liability was widely applied, in particular in connection with the application of an alternative criminal law measure in the form of a judicial fine.

22. In 2022 and 2023, the law on criminal prosecution for tax-related offences was improved through the regulation of such issues as the initiation of criminal cases and by reducing the statute of limitations for the launching of prosecutions in response to the legally stipulated indicia of such offences.

23. In 2023, a federal act was adopted to clarify the possibility of exemption from criminal liability on the grounds of restitution. A draft federal act is under consideration that would raise the thresholds for heavy and especially heavy damage in a number of economic offences.

24. The Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation has been active in protecting human rights. Between 2016 and 2022, the Commissioner's proposals were reflected in 114 statutory instruments, including 73 federal acts.

25. In 2021, the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions granted the institution of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation "A" status, the highest accreditation status. The efforts of the Commissioner's office to implement the Subcommittee's previous recommendations, its active cooperation with global and regional human rights protection bodies and its achievements in promoting cooperation with civil society institutions and improving legislation were recognized.

26. In 2020, the legislative regulation of the activities of human rights commissioners in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation was upgraded. Federal law specifies the status and jurisdiction of a regional commissioner and provides for additional guarantees of independence.

27. In the Office of the President of the Russian Federation, there is a Council for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights, which brings together representatives of the most authoritative non-governmental organizations and independent experts.

28. Active work is being carried to combat corruption in accordance with the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and its corresponding national action plans. The law enforcement agencies are carrying out continuous activities aimed at identifying, suppressing and disclosing corruption-related offences.

29. Legislation is being upgraded to enhance the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures. In 2018, a simplified procedure was introduced for taking disciplinary action against State and municipal officials, employees of State corporations (companies) and State extrabudgetary funds for corruption offences where these persons and entities admit to having committed an offence and a single statute of limitations was established for the imposition of penalties.

30. In 2021, the list of persons in respect of whom investigative measures are carried out for corruption-related offences was expanded.

31. In 2022, legal grounds were established under federal law for the forfeiture to the Russian Federation of funds in respect of which a person under investigation who was obliged to submit information on income, property and property-related obligations has failed to provide evidence confirming the legality of their origin.

C. International cooperation in the area of human rights (27–40)

32. The Russian Federation is making sustained efforts to strengthen its constructive and depoliticized dialogue on topical issues on the international human rights agenda, to promote equal and mutually respectful cooperation in the exercise and protection of human rights in accordance with the rules and principles of international law, to eliminate the practice of double standards and to prevent the use of human rights issues as a pretext for interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

33. In order to share best practices, the Russian Federation regularly holds consultations on human rights issues with its partners, at both bilateral and multilateral levels.

34. The issues of combating racism, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism, ethnic and religious intolerance and neo-Nazism, preserving historical memory and countering the falsification of history are of fundamental importance to the Russian Federation. In this connection, the Russian Federation welcomes the adoption of the yearly General Assembly resolution on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

35. The Russian Federation attaches great importance to the work of the Human Rights Council. In 2020, the Russian Federation was elected to the Council and actively worked within this key human rights body until April 2022, when, by a non-consensual decision, the General Assembly suspended this country's membership of the Council. In 2022 and 2023, the Russian Federation participated in the Council as an observer.

36. The Russian Federation continues to cooperate with the human rights treaty bodies. During the reporting period, the periodic reports of the Russian Federation were considered by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2021), the Human Rights Committee (2022) and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2023).

37. Interaction with regional organizations, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), continued on the human rights track. During the reporting period, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the head of the Programme for Gender of the OSCE secretariat visited the Russian Federation.

38. The country is party to many Council of Europe conventions open to third countries, including the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data. Russian experts participate in the working bodies of such international treaties.

39. The Russian Federation pays particular attention to specialized regional cooperation. The Commonwealth of Independent States has an Inter-State Council on Combating Corruption, and the Russian Federation takes an active part in its work. In 2022, on the platform of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Russian agencies organized activities to counter criminal activities related to kidnapping and trafficking in human beings, human organs and tissue, and also to prevent, detect and suppress crimes related to the exploitation of women and children and the production and distribution of pornographic products, including on the Internet.

40. The internal affairs agencies hold regular meetings of joint working groups on the implementation of labour agreements with Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and other countries, at which they discuss problematic issues arising in the course of labour activities exercised by citizens of the States parties.

41. The Russian Federation pursues an active and goal-oriented policy of promoting international development in the interests of stabilizing the socioeconomic and political situation in partner States, establishing good-neighbourly relations with neighbouring States, eliminating existing hotbeds of tension and conflict and preventing the emergence of potential such hotbeds (primarily in regions adjacent to the Russian Federation), and also consolidating its position in the world community and creating favourable external conditions for the development of the Russian Federation.

42. Particular attention is drawn to the efforts of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation in the area of international cooperation in the field of human rights. At present, there are 23 agreements with ombudsmen of foreign countries and national human rights organizations and 3 additional protocols to agreements concluded previously, and experience in human rights protection issues is actively exchanged within the framework of these agreements.

43. From 2018 to 2023, the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation and its representatives participated in dozens of international conferences, round tables and other events, exchanged experience within the framework of the Eurasian Ombudsman Alliance, and established cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross. In the context of the mass influx of refugees into the Russian Federation, constructive cooperation is being pursued with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with which a memorandum of understanding was signed in 2022. A total of 37 temporary accommodation sites in 14 constituent entities of the Russian Federation were visited jointly with UNHCR staff.

44. In the reporting period, the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation continued to cooperate with United Nations human rights bodies. In 2020, the Commissioner submitted alternative reports and comments to the Human Rights Council, working groups of the General Assembly and such United Nations treaty bodies as the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Committee against Torture. In all, seven alternative reports and comments on the protection of human rights were submitted.

III. Development in the protection of human rights and freedoms

A. Equality and freedom from discrimination (56–58, 68–69, 88–101, 121, 145, 151, 206, 239, 250–266)

45. Under Russian law, all forms of restriction of the rights and freedoms of citizens on the grounds of social, racial, sexual, ethnic, linguistic, religious or any other affiliation are prohibited.

46. Discrimination is prosecuted as a criminal offence and is understood to mean the infringement of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of a person and a citizen on the grounds of sex, race, ethnicity, language, origin, property and official status, place of residence, attitude to religion, beliefs, or membership of public associations or any social groups, committed by persons in exercise of their official position.

47. Any acts of violence, irrespective of the social and other groups against which they are perpetrated, shall entail an appropriate response from the law enforcement agencies. The motivation of an offence by hatred or enmity harboured against a social group is recognized as an aggravating circumstance.

48. The Russian Federation has placed a prohibition on the dissemination of information fomenting any form of discrimination. During the reporting period, liability was introduced for unjustified refusal to hire persons on the grounds of their having reached an age close to retirement, and also for the unjustified dismissal of such persons on the same grounds.

49. In 2022, the National Women's Strategy for the period 2023–2030 (hereinafter referred to as "the National Strategy") was approved. It sets out the main thrusts of State

policy in the interests of women and the goals, responsibilities and expected results of its implementation.

50. The government apparatus of the Russian Federation includes a coordinating council for the implementation of the National Women's Strategy, which was established to organize cooperation between the State authorities of the Russian Federation, the State authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, local authorities, and public, scientific and other organizations on issues relating to the improvement of policy for the advancement of women.

51. There are growing employment opportunities for women. Since 2021, an updated list of industries, jobs and positions with harmful and (or) hazardous working conditions in which the use of women's labour is restricted has been in effect. From 2022, the professions of aviation mechanic and fixed wing aircraft and helicopter maintenance engineer have been made available to women, and restrictions have been lifted on a number of types of work.

52. Considerable attention is devoted to countering discrimination in sport. In accordance with Russian law and the requirements of international federations, the regulatory documents of all-Russian sports federations enshrine the inadmissibility of any form of discrimination, racism and xenophobia against athletes and other persons involved in sport. For example, the Russian Football Union, a nationwide voluntary association, works to suppress any form of discrimination in football. For this purpose, a project office for sustainable development and social responsibility has been set up as part of the Union.

B. Promoting tolerance: countering racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (66–67, 72–87, 104–105, 123–129, 136, 199–205)

53. Article 29 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation prohibits propaganda or agitation designed to foment social, racial, ethnic or religious hatred and enmity.

54. Offences committed on the grounds of political, ideological, racial, ethnic or religious hatred or enmity or on the grounds of hatred or enmity for any social group are criminalized in the Russian Federation. Moreover, these motives are categorized as aggravating circumstances.

55. Law enforcement officers receive regular training on combating racial discrimination and profiling.

56. Under Russian law, it is categorically prohibited for civil servants to accord any preferences to certain social groups. The need to take into account the specific characteristics of different ethnic groups and to promote inter-ethnic and inter-confessional harmony has been enshrined in law.

57. In the reporting period, work continued on countering extremist manifestations in the domain of electoral rights. In 2021, a prohibition was placed on the election of citizens involved in the activities of extremist or terrorist organizations against which a court judgment has come into force to suppress or prohibit their activities. These restrictions are temporary in nature, remaining in force until the expiration of three or five years from the date of entry into force of the court judgment, depending on the nature of participation in the activities of the organization. It has also been determined that the electoral programmes of candidates, electoral associations, other campaign materials, speeches at public events and on the media may not contain incitements to extremist activity, or provide grounds for or justify extremism. During the reporting period, no cases were recorded of the use of discriminatory utterances on the grounds of ethnicity or of hate speech in political speeches delivered during election campaigns.

58. Under Russian law, the definition of extremist activity includes, among other acts, incitement to social, racial, national or religious discord; the advocacy of exclusiveness or the superiority or inferiority of citizens on social, racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic grounds; the propagation and public display of Nazi or similar attributes or symbols; public incitements to the performance of these acts; the mass production and dissemination of such

content; the organization and preparation of the said acts, and also their financing and incitement to their implementation; the public justification of terrorism and other terrorist activities.

59. One of the main objectives of State national policy is to prevent any form of discrimination on the grounds of social, racial, ethnic, linguistic or religious affiliation and to harmonize inter-ethnic relations. This approach is enshrined in the Strategy of State National Policy of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025 (hereinafter referred to as “the Strategy”).

60. The Presidential Council on Inter-Ethnic Relations, which includes representatives of federal ethnic and cultural autonomies, associations of indigenous minorities, and the scientific and academic community, was directly involved in the development of amendments to the Strategy. Questions about progress in implementation of the Strategy are openly discussed on public platforms, such as the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, and in expert and advisory bodies, with the participation of representatives of various ethnic groups.

61. In the Russian Federation, close attention is given to the implementation of projects aimed at establishing a single, consolidated cultural space and safeguarding the country’s cultural sovereignty and preventing the propagation of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional intolerance. This helps to harmonize inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations.

62. Special attention is paid to creating conditions for interaction between people of different ethnicities and religions. The Russian Federation is one of the few countries where a distinctive intercultural dialogue is ensured: about 200 cultures of different nations harmoniously interact in the country, and there are representatives of all the world’s religions living in the country. The cultures of all of its peoples benefit from support provided by the State, which helps them to overcome social isolation and prevents the formation of ethnic enclaves.

63. In 2022, a nationwide cultural and tourist itinerary was created, known as “Multifaceted Russia”. The itinerary includes trips to centres for the preservation of folk traditions, trades and crafts, the viewing of unique artifacts in museums, and visits to ethnographic exhibitions, folk festivals and historical re-enactments.

C. Protection of socially vulnerable groups (44, 59–60, 114, 117–120, 122, 241–249, 271–282, 284–292)

64. Family law in the Russian Federation is underpinned by the need to strengthen the family, the inadmissibility of arbitrary interference by anyone in family affairs, the unhindered exercise by family members of their rights and the availability of judicial protection for those rights.

65. The regulation of family relations is based, first and foremost, on the pre-eminence of the family upbringing of children. Thus, the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation has emphasized that, in resolving cases involving the enforced termination of the stay of foreign nationals in the Russian Federation, such humanitarian circumstances as their marital status and the exercise of care for their children shall be taken into consideration.

66. The Russian Federation is upgrading its laws on strengthening and protecting the family and family values, expanding the provision of State social assistance to families with children, ensuring that children are kept in their birth families, improving the system of support for orphaned children and children left without parental care, and fostering a spirit of volunteerism with a view to preventing child abandonment.

67. Provision has been made for measures to support vulnerable categories of the population, including children. For example, no parental fee is charged for the care and supervision of children with disabilities, orphaned children and children left without parental care attending State and municipal educational institutions which have preschool programmes.

68. Since 2019, activities to put into effect the road map for the State policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025 have been carried out as part of the principal events planned for the Decade of Childhood. Every year, a nationwide contest is held to select the “Family of the year”, with the participation of more than 3,000 families.

69. Since 2023, work has been under way to carry out the Strategy for the Comprehensive Safety of Children in the Russian Federation, which envisages a sustained State policy for children and the development of positive trends in ensuring a happy and protected childhood. Activities are carried out to counter threats to children’s life and health, prevent infant and child mortality, child injuries and other such problems. The investigative authorities pay special attention to preventive work with teenagers, heightening their legal awareness and promoting so-called “computer hygiene”, including in the investigation of criminal acts committed by minors or against them.

70. A long-term programme to promote youth employment for the period up to 2030 is being implemented, the activities of which are aimed at developing vocational guidance work with young people, industrial tourism, the assimilation of entrepreneurial skills and practical training on the premises of individual entrepreneurs. In 2022, the unemployment rate for young people aged between 15 and 29 dropped to 8.5 per cent.

71. During the reporting period, liability for offences against the sexual inviolability and sexual freedom of minors, including through the use of the media or the Internet, was stiffened and liability was also introduced for the concealment of serious offences against minors.

72. Criminal liability for sexual violence against minors has been stiffened. The new wording duplicates the provision of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation on liability for torture involving particular cruelty, abuse or torment of the victim.

73. Preventive work aimed at preventing criminal offences against children has been stepped up. Thus, an Internet liaison service has been set up on the official website of the Office of the Procurator-General of the Russian Federation, on which citizens may file complaints about violations committed against minors, including reports of child abuse or physical, mental and (or) sexual violence in families, care and educational organizations.

74. The protection of women’s rights includes the prevention of social disadvantage, which covers conflicts within the family, significant drops in income, loss of employment and deterioration of health.

75. Article 116.1 of the Criminal Code was amended in 2022 to include liability under this article for violent crimes committed by persons with a criminal record. A benefit was introduced for victims of the administrative offence of battery in the form of exemption from State duty on claims for compensation for property damage and (or) moral harm where the said administrative offence was committed by a person who has a criminal record under article 116.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and where such acts are committed by the same person against the same victim.

76. In 2019, amendments were adopted to the Federal Police Act, which gave police officers the right to apply preventive measures, in particular, to give an individual an official warning about the inadmissibility of actions that create conditions conducive to the commission of crimes and administrative offences, or about the inadmissibility of continuing anti-social behaviour.

77. During the reporting period, the statistical reporting procedure was upgraded, oversight was exercised of persons committing offences in the family and domestic sphere, and attention was paid to the comprehensive nature of preventive work carried out by police officers relating to individual citizens on the preventive registry of the internal affairs bodies.

78. In order to foster a zero-tolerance approach to the sexual exploitation of women and human trafficking, law enforcement agencies widely publicize in the media the outcome of work to solve individual crimes committed against women.

79. Since the Russian Federation ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, considerable work has been carried out to bring the country’s law into line with the rules of international law. Amendments have been made to some 40 federal and

750 regional laws, and also to administrative regulations for the provision of State and municipal services.

80. System-wide legal requirements for the creation of an impediment-free environment for persons with disabilities are being gradually implemented in the areas of education, health care, employment, culture, transport, urban planning, communications and information, and sport.

81. Work continues to ensure that voting premises have unhindered access for voters with disabilities, for them to cast their votes, and to provide situational assistance to enable voters to exercise their right of suffrage.

82. State financial support is provided to publishing houses and publishing organizations, which, by the end of 2022, will have produced 1,680 works of fiction, popular science and educational literature and 5 periodicals for the visually impaired, including in Braille and large print.

83. Job opportunities for persons with disabilities have expanded: currently, if employers are unable to meet their disability employment quota because they lack the opportunity for the employment of a person with disabilities in their own organization, they may fulfil that obligation through a contractual arrangement with another legal entity, whereby they secure employment for a person with disabilities in another organization.

84. Since 2019, a State service has been introduced for the organization of support for the employment of persons with disabilities, through the provision of job-finding assistance to individual unemployed persons with disabilities, creating conditions for them to perform their occupation and speeding up their occupational adaptation at the workplace, and also facilitating their travel to and from the workplace and their movement around the territory of their employer.

85. The rehabilitation and social adaptation of individuals and children with disabilities in the domain of physical culture and sport are carried out through the organization of adaptive physical culture classes. The register of independent adaptive institutions now includes 91 organizations from 61 constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

86. There are specialized cultural organizations operating in the Russian Federation, such as libraries for the blind and inclusive theatre organizations. Measures to support inclusive projects are being implemented, and networks of inclusive creative laboratories are being set up on the basis of cultural and leisure institutions. Over the course of 2021, federal museums held 31,739 inclusive events attended by 308,311 individuals with disabilities. In all, 91 inclusive creative laboratories have been established in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Federal State museums have introduced special concessions for people with disabilities, such as free or discounted admission.

87. Since 2019, the federal project “Older Generation”, part of the national project “Demography”, has been under implementation, with the aim of enhancing the quality of life of older citizens, creating conditions conducive to active longevity, and motivating them to lead a healthy lifestyle.

88. Since 2021, measures have been put into effect for the vocational training of citizens aged 50 and older and citizens approaching retirement age. In 2022, 66,300 such citizens were trained, and employment was provided for 55,500 citizens in these categories.

89. The system of health care for senior citizens and the development of geriatric care are being improved. The number of geriatric facilities has been increased, a set of measures has been approved for the prevention of falls and fractures suffered by the elderly and aged, and plans have been developed to introduce measures for the prevention of cognitive disorders in senior citizens.

90. Since 2018, the Russian Federation has implemented and continues to improve its long-term care system. As of 2023, the number of elderly citizens and citizens with disabilities receiving such care totalled over 140,000.

91. The Russian Federation has created a multidisciplinary system of social services for senior citizens. In 2022, 7.84 million elderly citizens and citizens with disabilities received such services.

92. The system of access for senior citizens to educational resources is being upgraded. There are more than 1,280 so-called “silver universities” in the Russian Federation, where elderly citizens can gain new knowledge in various fields. Computer literacy training is a popular area: in 2022, over 135,000 senior citizens received training in this subject.

93. Systematic work is being carried out to engage senior citizens in physical education and sport. In 2022, as many as 6.7 million such citizens regularly participated in physical education and sport.

94. Measures are taken to ensure the involvement of senior citizens in cultural and leisure activities. Cultural organizations have the right to give elderly people (pensioners) preferential treatment in the form of reduced ticket prices or free admission.

95. Efforts have been stepped up to create a comprehensive system in support of volunteer activities. In 2022, the number of “silver” volunteers grew to 164,000.

D. Right to liberty and security of person: countering trafficking in persons (106, 113, 130, 149–150, 169–173, 208–213, 237, 268–270)

96. In accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation, everyone has the right to life, liberty and personal inviolability.

97. The Russian Federation has legal arrangements for the non-application of the death penalty that are stricter than the international standard, based on the provisions of the Constitution of the Russian Federation as interpreted by the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation. This approach proceeds from the legal position of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, which has explained that, as a result of the long-standing moratorium on the death penalty, sustainable guarantees have been formed of the human right not to be subjected to the death penalty and a constitutional and legal system has developed within which – taking into account international trends and the commitments entered into by the Russian Federation – there is an irreversible process aimed at abolition of the death penalty.

98. Consequently, the Russian Federation is in compliance with the main provisions of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, although it has not acceded to that protocol.

99. The Constitution of the Russian Federation guarantees that no one shall be subjected to torture, violence or other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment. The commission of such criminal acts shall be prosecuted as prescribed by law.

100. The Code of Criminal Procedure of the Russian Federation stipulates that evidence obtained through the use of torture, violence or degrading treatment may not be used as the basis for prosecution and shall be inadmissible.

101. Criminal liability is provided for coercion, including through the use of violence, bullying or torture, to testify or through the use of threats, blackmail or other illegal actions on the part of the investigator or person conducting the initial inquiry, or by another person with the knowledge or acquiescence of the investigator or person conducting the initial inquiry.

102. In 2022, the concept of “torture” was expanded and clarified, and the liability stiffened for the commission of a number of acts of malfeasance involving the use of torture.

103. The road map for the development of the penal enforcement system of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2020 includes among its principal aims the establishment of measures to render more benign the conditions of remand in custody and detention of persons serving sentences of deprivation of liberty, and also the strengthening of guarantees of respect for their rights and lawful interests.

104. On the basis of a ruling of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, the law has been amended to allow an immediate appeal against the refusal by a court for a suspect or accused person remanded in custody to be sent for a medical examination to establish whether or not such person has a condition that precludes detention in custody.

105. Provision is made for effective forms of supervision of the use of physical force, special means and weapons against convicted inmates and persons remanded in custody and liability is established for abuse of official authority in infringing the rights of persons held in penal institutions.

106. The law enforcement agencies of the Russian Federation, in cooperation with the law enforcement agencies of other countries, carry out annual preventive and operational activities to identify and suppress the criminal activities of organized groups and criminal associations with international or interregional links involved in organizing illegal migration, human trafficking, drug trafficking and the perpetration of extremist and terrorist offences.

107. The Russian authorities continue to take active national and international measures aimed at combating trafficking in persons.

108. By 2004, the Russian Federation had already ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which form a solid basis for cooperation between States in combating trafficking in persons. The Russian Federation takes an active part in the Conference of the Parties to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and in the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons established under the Convention, which are designed to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention.

109. The issue of strengthening international cooperation in countering human trafficking is given extensive consideration during the annual sessions of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The Russian Federation is making a significant contribution to the Commission's development of measures to step up cooperation in this area.

110. Law enforcement agencies are giving close attention to the problem of Russian citizens being taken abroad for labour and sexual exploitation under the guise of modelling agencies, employment firms, dating services, language courses and travel agencies. Law enforcement efforts are aimed at eliminating the sources for the supply of victims to foreign countries.

111. An important place in the system of prevention of human trafficking-related offences is occupied by oversight of enforcement of the law on health care. Inspections are carried out to prevent possible abuse by medical workers and offences relating to the donation or transplant of human organs and tissues and the illegal trafficking of biomaterial. The Russian Federation has enacted a legal prohibition on the sale and purchase of human organs and tissues, under penalty of criminal prosecution.

112. In 2022, to minimize the risks of organized human trafficking, legal steps were taken to regulate the conditions under which the system of surrogate motherhood may be employed on the territory of the Russian Federation.

113. Special attention is paid to the timeliness and comprehensive nature of assistance to children at risk, children with disabilities and orphaned children. During the reporting period, procuratorial intervention resulted in the protection of the rights of nearly 550,000 children.

114. In 2020, the Strategy for Countering Extremism in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025 was adopted, which lays out a road map for the implementation of State policy in this area. The Strategy defines the concepts of "extremist ideology" and "countering extremism" and identifies factors that have an adverse impact on the inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations in society. Regular meetings are held of the Interdepartmental Commission on Combating Extremism in the Russian Federation.

115. Law enforcement agencies engage in dialogue with representatives of ethnic diasporas, ethnocultural, social, youth and religious organizations, participate in sociopolitical forums and conferences, and organize round tables, lectures and talks and interregional conferences aimed at fostering a negative view of radical ideology, an

intolerance of hostility and xenophobia and the development of civic activity in the spirit of patriotism.

116. Information support for such events is provided on the official websites of law enforcement agencies, in the media and on various Internet platforms, including social networks. The total audience reach is more than 15 million views by persons watching television broadcasts, or visiting websites, social networks and messaging applications.

E. Administration of justice and the judicial system (137–144)

117. The operation of the judiciary and judicial proceedings in the Russian Federation are regulated by the Constitution of the Russian Federation and federal constitutional and other federal acts adopted in accordance therewith. The Russian Federation strictly follows international standards of administration of justice, striving to ensure the highest level of protection of human rights and freedoms.

118. The Russian authorities are working to improve the judicial system in order to enhance the quality and efficiency of court proceedings and to strengthen confidence in justice.

119. During the reporting period, the Russian Federation carried out large-scale judicial reforms, as a result of which the regulatory framework for determining the jurisdiction of specific cases in the courts of the judicial system of the Russian Federation was clarified, general jurisdiction courts of appeal and cassation were introduced, and the procedure for the consideration of cases in the relevant judicial instances was clearly set out.

120. Since 2019, the monitoring and oversight stages in the system of courts of general jurisdiction have been revised, leading to the creation of five general jurisdiction courts of appeal and nine courts of cassation. This has made it possible to harmonize the judicial system, shaping it as a single, four-link structure, and to optimize the judicial workload.

121. The reform of the system guarantees the right to a process of “end-to-end” cassation, whereby all appeals against final court decisions that have entered into legal force are subject to examination on the merits, if they meet the formal requirements relating to the appellant’s entitlement to file a complaint and to the substance of the complaint, provided that all remedies for appeal against the court decision in question have been exhausted before the decision enters into legal force. The reform was another step towards the convergence of the system of courts of general jurisdiction and courts of arbitration, and ensured the greater accessibility of justice in a court handling appeals in cassation.

122. The constitutional (charter) courts of constituent entities of the Russian Federation, whose powers included checking regional legislation for compliance with the constitution (charter) of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation, have been abolished. It has now been established that constituent entities of the Russian Federation are entitled to adopt decisions to establish constitutional (charter) councils operating under the legislative (representative) bodies of State power of those constituent entities.

123. In 2019, it was decided that persons whose appeals are accepted for consideration by the court shall not incur any negative consequences of their incorrect choice of court procedure or branch of the judiciary in which the appeal to the court is to be heard, thereby helping to expedite the disposition of cases and to ensure better access to justice.

124. In the area of procedural law, elimination of the principle of continuity of civil proceedings and the enhanced procedure for the consideration of a case after its adjournment by the court, along with restriction of the right for the same person to make a repeated challenge on the same grounds, have contributed to speeding up the consideration of cases and optimizing the judicial workload in the courts of general jurisdiction. In civil proceedings, it has become possible for courts to consider lawsuits in defence of the rights and lawful interests of a group of persons, which has helped to speed up the consideration of civil cases, reduce financial costs and prevent courts from issuing contradictory judicial acts.

125. There have been continuous improvements in the legal process for the resolution of administrative cases involving the award of compensation for breach of the right to trial within a reasonable time and the right to enforcement of a judicial act within a reasonable

time, pertaining in particular to clarification of the jurisdiction and time limits for consideration of such cases. In 2022, federal acts were adopted to clarify the procedure and conditions for an accused person (suspect) to submit a new (repeated) application to the court for the award of compensation for breach of the right to criminal proceedings within a reasonable time.

126. Comprehensive measures have been taken to expand the use of conciliation procedures.

127. The Russian Federation has continued the process of digitalizing the judicial system, including through the introduction of information technologies into court proceedings at the legislative level.

128. Elements of e-justice are being introduced and developed in court proceedings, including the automatic assignment of cases, the use of videoconferencing, the mandatory audio recording of court hearings in civil and criminal cases and economic disputes in courts of first instance and appeal, the possibility of submitting comments on the inaccuracy and incompleteness of audio recordings, and other such measures.

129. In 2024, it is planned to launch the “Justice Online” service, which will make it possible for people: to familiarize themselves with case materials through an information system defined by the Judicial Department of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation; automatically to determine the jurisdiction of a claim submitted through the service, thus eliminating the risk of a possible erroneous choice of court; to receive court notices and copies of judicial acts through the single portal of State and municipal services; to gain access to the web-conference system through their personal account on the single portal.

130. The law on justices of the peace has been reformed: the legal status of judges of federal courts and justices of the peace has been harmonized, and the procedure for replacing absent justices of the peace has been regulated by analogy with the judicial district system, in which there is a single position of justice of the peace.

131. The procedure for determining the disciplinary liability of judges has been improved by extending the list of penalties and by differentiating the types of liability. The list of activities in which retired judges may engage has also been expanded and their material and social guarantees have been strengthened.

132. Considerable attention has been paid to the issue of organizational and technical support for the judicial system. Over the period from 2017 to 2022, 54 buildings were constructed or refurbished. Videoconferencing systems have been installed in 503 courtrooms of federal courts of general jurisdiction and 1,288 courtrooms of federal arbitration courts. The courts have been better equipped with audio and video record systems, for the video recording and live broadcasting of court hearings, and with equipment enabling victims and witnesses to be questioned without the possibility of visual observation. In all, 1,100 court buildings have been equipped with modern technical means of protection and security systems.

133. Work has been carried out on the digitalization of the judicial system and the introduction of information technology in the work of the courts. The “eJustice” State computerized system now includes, in its Internet portal, an “eJustice” module, which electronically submits documents to federal courts of general jurisdiction and provides for the possibility of giving individual citizens access, through their personal accounts, to information on the progress of cases to which they are party.

134. The Supreme Court of the Russian Federation routinely brings information to the attention of judges and court staff on the international legal obligations of the Russian Federation, including those applicable to the protection of human rights and freedoms.

135. During the reporting period, work was completed on the compilation of 36 reviews of the practice of inter-State bodies for the protection of human rights and freedoms, 45 summaries of the practice and legal positions of international treaty and non-contractual bodies operating in the area of the protection of human rights and freedoms, and 2,900 international documents, and these were posted on the official website of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation.

136. The law in the area of constitutional proceedings has been updated: the substance of constitutional challenges and the category of persons entitled to appeal to the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation have been expanded.

137. During the reporting period, the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation handed down a number of rulings expanding the opportunities for judicial protection. In particular, the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation has adopted decisions aimed at protecting the right to legal proceedings within a reasonable period of time; it has drawn attention to the need for full reimbursement of expenses from the federal budget for the services of a legal representative in criminal cases terminated at the pretrial stage on grounds other than those of exoneration; and, among other actions, it has upheld the right of accused persons remanded in custody to the services of a notary.

138. Providing free legal aid to vulnerable categories of citizens is also a priority of the domestic policy of the Russian Federation. Work is under way to upgrade the law of the Russian Federation with a view to enhancing the quality of qualified legal assistance, provided free of charge, and making it more easily accessible.

139. The constituent entities of the Russian Federation have enacted legislation to regulate the provision of free legal aid and have designated the responsible executive authorities in this area. In 83 regions of the country, additional guarantees have been established for exercise of the right of citizens to free legal aid.

140. In the State system of free legal aid, State legal bureaux have been established in 39 constituent entities of the Russian Federation. In 2022, the number of lawyers participating in the State free legal aid system grew to 10,281.

141. Free legal aid in the non-State free legal aid system is provided by 304 non-State free legal aid centres.

142. In 2022, citizens received free legal aid in 735,618 cases.

143. At the end of 2022, the “Legal Aid” information system was set in operation. This is an Internet resource that combines a set of information services and software products designed to inform and provide legal assistance free of charge with the use of information technology. Between December 2022 and July 2023, some 18,000 users visited the site and 16,139 applications referrals were made and 18,456 legal consultations provided over the information system.

F. Prison system: law enforcement agencies (134–135)

144. The Russian authorities are carrying out a range of sustained measures to improve the situation of persons remanded in custody and convicted prisoners.

145. Significant additional guarantees of the rights of persons in custody are provided for by rulings of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, which has prohibited arbitrary deprivation of the right to extended visits of convicted persons who have remained in, or been transferred to, a remand centre, when they need to participate in investigative actions; it has removed the prohibition on replacing deprivation of liberty of a convicted man with forced labour solely because that man has reached the age of 60; it has ensured that judicial oversight may be exercised of decisions to change the place where a suspect or accused person is remanded in custody; and it has clarified the application of the standards for the living space or sanitary facilities of convicted persons detained in remand centres, making it possible to seek compensation for inadequate conditions of detention and other such circumstances.

146. In 2021, the road map for development of the penal enforcement system of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030 was approved, setting out the goals and priority areas for development of that system, upgrading the penal enforcement policy and rendering it more benign.

147. In 2022, the law on the procedure for public oversight of the upholding of human rights in places of forced detention was amended, by optimizing the procedure for the

formation and terms of reference of public monitoring commissions and introducing the possibility of public oversight in institutions administering criminal punishment in the form of forced labour, and also by providing assistance to persons sentenced to forced labour.

148. In 2022, members of such public monitoring commissions made 2,466 visits to penal institutions, issued 1,398 findings based on the results of such visits, conducted 6,860 individual interviews and considered 1,788 written appeals from prisoners and persons remanded in custody, and conducted some 650 collective events, including hearings, seminars and workshops.

149. According to the road map for development of the penal enforcement system of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030, one of the areas for such development is the improvement of the institutions' organizational and structural system. In this connection, work is under way to demolish dilapidated facilities and to create conditions for convicted persons to serve their sentences in correctional facilities within the territory of the constituent entity of the Russian Federation in which they are resident or were sentenced or in which their family resides.

150. Work is also under way to move correctional facilities out of hard-to-reach and sparsely populated areas. Since 2018, 115 such correctional facilities, 21 groupings of correctional colonies and 15 remand centres have been shut down.

151. In order to bring the places where convicted persons are serving their sentences closer to their places of residence, isolated sections with different types of custodial regime are being set up on the territory of correctional colonies. Since 2018, 67 such sections have been established.

152. In 2020, a federal act was adopted that establishes the possibility of sending or transferring convicted persons sentenced to imprisonment or forced labour to an institution located near their place of residence or the place of residence of their immediate family.

153. Additional facilities are being created for the detention of suspects and accused persons and the material and living conditions of convicted persons are being upgraded. Over the period from 2019 to 2022, 21 such facilities were commissioned, including a 366-bed remand centre and other auxiliary facilities. Measures are being implemented to create an impediment-free environment for citizens with limited mobility.

154. Among measures to upgrade the technical equipment of penal institutions, the number of video surveillance cameras has been increased and the use of video recorders by staff on duty has been made mandatory. Officers who fail to use video recorders while on duty are subject to disciplinary liability and, even if there is no recorded evidence of the use of physical force or special means against suspects, accused and convicted persons (in the absence of force majeure circumstances), consideration will be given to the possibility of their dismissal from service.

155. Measures are being taken to improve conditions for the transport of persons under escort, including the renovation and expansion of the fleet of special vehicles with enhanced technical and operational performance.

156. The quality of medical care provided to suspects, accused and convicted persons in penal institutions is improving. Measures are being taken to raise the level of medical staffing in branches of the medical and sanitary units of the Federal Penitentiary Service; where necessary, medical assistance is provided on a contractual basis in medical organizations of the State and municipal health-care systems.

157. In the Russian Federation, close attention is paid to implementation of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures.

158. Alternative forms of punishment are widely used to reduce the number of convicted persons held in correctional facilities. These include punishments not involving the isolation of convicted persons from society, such as fines, restriction on military service, compulsory work; punitive work; deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or engage in certain activities; partial deprivation of liberty; and forced labour, along with other measures, such as deferment of the actual serving of the sentence; probation, and others.

159. In the Russian Federation, there are 85 offices of the Penal Enforcement Inspectorate, a federal budget-funded institution, which has 1,461 local branches.

160. The practice of using non-custodial measures of restraint continues to grow: alternatives to detention include house arrest and the prohibition of certain activities. During the reporting period, such preventive measures were applied to 125,000 persons.

161. By 2023, for the imposition of penalties in the form of forced labour, 379 institutions administering such punishment had been established, with possible accommodation for more than 42,000 convicted inmates.

162. With a view to the re-socialization and social adaptation of convicted persons, both during the serving of their sentences and after release, a law on probation has been adopted, providing for various types of probation (supervised, custodial, post-custody) and also the development of an individual programme of re-socialization, social adaptation and social rehabilitation, including the legal and other measures to be applied to particular individuals depending on their living circumstances, personality characteristics and individual needs.

163. Conditions for women in penal institutions, including those who are pregnant or caring for a child, are constantly being improved.

164. In 2019, a living space standard was established of at least four square metres for each child under the age of 3 living in the cell with the mother and provisions were introduced for the separation of women with a child under the age of 3 and pregnant women from other suspects and accused persons.

165. With effect from 2020, women with a child under the age of 3 and pregnant women are entitled under law to apply for conditional early release from their sentence and commutation of the unserved part of the sentence to a milder form of punishment, once the convicted person has served at least one fourth of the sentence imposed for an offence of lesser gravity.

166. There are plans, in 2022, for further improvement of the detention conditions for women, including pregnant women and those with minor children, relating to the staffing of cells in remand centres, the hygiene, health, material and living conditions, and the rules of their detention.

167. The list of authorized possessions and items that suspects and accused persons may carry, store, receive in parcels and packages and purchase by cashless payment has been expanded, with the addition to the list of, in particular, e-books, children's games, prams (for women with children under the age of 3), wheelchairs and other technical means of rehabilitation.

168. In 2023, provisions were made under law to raise from 3 to 4 the age until which children are housed together with their mothers in penal institutions, thus helping to preserve the kinship ties of convicted women.

169. The system of medical care for women is being improved. A total of 166 gynaecological consulting rooms and 45 examination rooms have been set up in medical units of the Federal Penitentiary Service of the Russian Federation. There are eight medical clinics with a total of 294 obstetric and gynaecological beds, of which 84 are 24-hour inpatient beds and 210 for day patients.

170. In 2019, new standards (conditions) were adopted for the transport of suspects and persons accused of the commission of offences, to ensure proper escort conditions in special vehicles.

171. In 2023, to uphold the guarantee of electoral rights, provision was made under law for voters in remand centres to be able to vote outside the constituency in which they are entitled to vote. This arrangement is now being piloted on an experimental basis in pretrial remand centres located in Moscow and the Moscow province.

172. In addition, in 2021–2022, 49 temporary holding facilities and 23 special reception centres for the remand in custody of persons placed under administrative detention were designed and built; major refurbishment was carried out of 392 holding facilities and 49 special reception centres. Ten special facilities have been put into operation, including

seven administrative buildings, housing temporary holding facilities and special reception centres. In 2023, one temporary holding facility was commissioned.

G. Civil and political rights, civil society institutions (61–65, 71, 131–133, 152–168, 174–197, 207)

173. Under article 29 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, censorship is forbidden and the freedom of thought and expression and the freedom of mass communication are guaranteed.

174. The freedom of thought and expression and the freedom of assembly are guaranteed to all. The exercise of these freedoms, including in accordance with international practice, may however be subject to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, including for the protection of health or morals, or the reputation or rights of others.

175. No disproportionate restrictions are imposed by Russian law on exercise of the right to freedom of assembly and expression.

176. The Constitution of the Russian Federation guarantees the right to peaceful assembly, without weapons, to hold meetings, rallies, demonstrations and marches and to picket. Exercise of this right forms an important element of the participation of citizens in the management of the affairs of the State.

177. Under law, the conduct of public events shall be subject to a prior notification procedure. An authority may only refuse approval for the conduct of a public event in cases where the notification of its holding is submitted by a person who, in accordance with the law, is not entitled to organize public events, or if the notification specifies a venue where, in accordance with the law, the holding of a public event is prohibited.

178. Citizens and organizations are entitled to challenge such decisions of the authorities in court.

179. Under Russian law, a comprehensive and integrated approach is followed to the protection of freedom of speech and expression. A prohibition has been enacted on obstructing the activities of journalists. Information sources are protected. A specific court order is required for disclosure of an information source. The procedure for refuting inaccurate information is laid down by law.

180. In order to systematize the legal framework for monitoring the activities of foreign agents, a federal act on monitoring the activities of persons acting under foreign influence was adopted in 2022. The law introduces the general notion of a person performing the functions of a foreign agent, sets out criteria for identifying persons as foreign agents and the categories of persons who cannot be recognized as foreign agents and who are exempt from the obligation to submit an application for inclusion in the register, establishes a mechanism for removing persons from the register, defines the grounds for their removal and sets out a simplified procedure for the withdrawal from the register of individuals included in it for the first time.

181. Civil society is actively developing in the Russian Federation. As of July 2023, there were more than 212,000 registered non-profit organizations.

182. In the Russian Federation, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, including the right to profess, individually or in community with others, any religion or to profess none, freely to choose, hold and disseminate religious and other convictions and to act in accordance with them are guaranteed to all persons (article 28 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation).

183. The steady growth of religious organizations is registered. In 2022, there was a total of 32,123 registered religious organizations and, in the first half of 2023, 32,194 such organizations, evidence of the realization of citizens' rights to freedom of religion and to freedom of association.

184. In the reporting period, amendments were made to the election law of the Russian Federation relating to the introduction of modern digital technologies in the electoral process.

185. A system has been introduced whereby voters may be included in the electoral roll for their current location (the “mobile voter” system). This mechanism ensures that voters who are unable to travel to the polling station for their electoral district on election day can still cast their vote.

186. Following amendments to the law, the single portal of State and municipal services is now actively used in the conduct of elections. The system comprises some 20 digital services, such as voter information and applications by voters to be included in the voter list for the place where they are actually located.

187. In 2019 and 2020, pilot exercises were carried out in the use of digital polling stations, whereby voters holding active voting rights could vote in the election even if they were outside their constituency on election day. For this purpose, five thousand digital polling stations were established in Moscow.

188. During the reporting period, remote electronic voting with the use of special software has been rapidly developed. It is possible to vote with the use of any technical device (computer, tablet, phone) by opening a special site on the Internet.

189. The introduction of modern digital technologies into the electoral process has affected the procedure for collecting and verifying voter signatures in support of the nomination of candidates and candidate lists. Voters can now use the single portal system to support the nomination of a candidate or a list of candidates. At the same time, the traditional method of support – by signing the paper signature sheet – may still be used.

190. In 2018, the system of independent (public) election observation was introduced, providing an additional guarantee for the exercise of citizens’ electoral rights. The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and civic chambers of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation may appoint an observer. This has made it possible for observation to be performed not only by observers with an interest in the election result (appointed by registered candidates and electoral associations), but also by observers without any such interest. During the reporting period, 688,828 observers were appointed by the civic chambers.

H. Exercise of economic, social and cultural rights (198, 214–231, 236)

191. The Constitution of the Russian Federation decrees that the Russian Federation shall be a social State.

192. In 2020, the Constitution of the Russian Federation stipulated that the Russian Federation shall establish a system of pension provision for citizens based on the principles of universality, fairness and the solidarity of generations, and shall support the effective functioning of that system (art. 75 (6)). This sets a fundamental benchmark in terms of ensuring the quality of life of older people.

193. The social protection of unemployed citizens of near-retirement age has been strengthened. With effect from 2019, the maximum unemployment benefit for such citizens has been raised. The payment of unemployment benefit at the increased maximum level is guaranteed by law to citizens who, prior to the specified date, were in fact already close to retirement age, were recognized as unemployed and were receiving the then maximum amount of this benefit.

194. The social policy of the Russian Federation is aimed at raising the level of pensions awarded to elderly citizens. Non-contributory pensions of non-working pensioners are increased annually (indexed) at a rate not lower than inflation. There are no pensioners in the Russian Federation with a monthly income below the pensioner’s subsistence minimum for the region in which they are resident. All non-working pensioners receive a social supplement to bring their pensions up to the subsistence minimum for the region in which they are resident.

195. Since 2017, the proportion of the population living in poverty has steadily declined. During the reporting period, 4.6 million citizens overcame poverty thanks to active social policies. The reduction of poverty is attributable to the increase in the level of social payments, implementation of social programmes aimed at the most vulnerable groups of the population, and the upward trend in wages, pensions and other forms of income.

196. With effect from 2020, improved conditions have been provided under federal law for individuals whose families have one or more children. Families with children receive a maternity (family) grant from the birth of the first child. Since 2022, men raising children alone, when the mothers of these children were not Russian citizens and who have died, have been included in the list of persons entitled to additional measures of State support in the form of maternity grants.

197. Under law, there are strengthened guarantees of the provision to large families of the additional social support prescribed in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Where regional social support measures for families with children are concerned, the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation has ruled that the public authorities may not arbitrarily abandon their earlier social obligations, and, if there are grounds for these obligations to be revoked, compensatory arrangements must be set in place to mitigate the possible negative consequences of such revocation for citizens who had legitimate expectations of receiving these support measures.

198. Measures have been taken to raise the level of the pension awarded to the parents of a disabled child after the child has reached the age of majority and has been recognized by a court as disabled since childhood.

199. One of the priority areas is the improvement of legislation in the cultural sphere, aimed, among other things, at creating the most favourable conditions for representatives of creative professions, access to and protection of cultural assets, and upholding the cultural rights of citizens. During the reporting period, a number of instruments were adopted, such as laws expanding the access of the blind, visually impaired and persons with other disabilities to works created in special formats; and a law on increasing State support for start-up film projects, exceptional animated and documentary films, and other ventures.

200. The Russian Federation has a network of social service organizations providing social services to citizens (families with children, women, minors), including victims of family violence. Their work is carried out through the agency of other social service organizations, such as comprehensive social service centres, and family and children's assistance centres, and also through specially established inpatient departments that perform the functions of crisis centres.

201. The Russian Federation is upgrading its labour legislation, including through increased digitalization.

202. In 2021, in order to improve flexible forms of employment in the country's labour law and to promote the use of information and communications technology in labour relations, the range of remote working opportunities has been expanded under law.

203. Since 2020, the guarantees of citizens' rights relating to the payment of severance pay in the event of dismissal in connection with the closure of an organization or the reduction of its staff or numbers of employees have been strengthened: in the process of State registration relating to the closure of a legal entity, evidence must be provided of such payments to employees in accordance with labour law.

204. In 2023, the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation ruled that severance pay must be granted to employees separated by mutual agreement of the parties where the payment of such severance pay in the event of separation on this basis is stipulated by the employment contract and (or) agreement on the termination of such contract, in the amount specified in such contract and (or) agreement.

205. As of 2021, employers have been given the opportunity to introduce electronic human-resource document management systems in their organization, in other words, are now able to create, sign, use and store work-related documents electronically without duplicating them on paper.

206. A set of legislative measures has been adopted to promote the formation of a favourable business climate in the country, reduce the risks of doing business and mitigate real threats to Russian business and the economy as a whole.

207. A nationwide project in support of small and medium-sized enterprises and individual entrepreneurial initiative is being implemented, in the course of which an extensive support infrastructure is being set in place and more than 400 “My Business” centres have been established, which operate in accordance with uniform standards and provide comprehensive assistance.

208. In 2021, a digital platform for small and medium-sized enterprises, with the URL <https://mcp.pf/>, was launched, through which entrepreneurs can remotely obtain government and commercial services, benefits and support measures, including loans, that are needed for business development.

209. Rapid digitalization in the tax domain has made it possible to introduce new special arrangements based on the automation of all processes for the computation and payment of taxes. Since 2019, a special tax regime has been in operation for self-employed citizens, which allows them to do all the legal work for their businesses without leaving their homes, to register and pay their taxes over a smartphone application. In 2022, an automated simplified taxation system was launched for certain categories of enterprises. This relieves them from the need to keep records, file reports, calculate their tax and pay insurance premiums.

210. As part of the reform of the system of audit and oversight activities, the administrative burden on businesses has been lightened, scheduled inspections have been abolished, and the number of mandatory requirements on the part of the oversight authorities has been reduced. Administrative fines for first-time offences have been replaced by warnings.

211. Work is under way to ensure the accessibility and high quality of State and municipal services. Currently, there are 13,000 so-called “My Documents” offices, with 47,000 windows at which citizens can make enquiries. In 2022, 352 federal services became available electronically on the single portal of State and municipal services.

212. In the Russian Federation, all persons have the right to necessary medical care, to be provided free of charge in accordance with the programme of State guarantees for the provision of cost-free medical assistance, and also to chargeable medical and other services, including in accordance with voluntary medical insurance schemes.

213. The accessibility of medical care has been ensured in the reporting period through the expansion of the State guarantee programme, by extending the range of medical care and widening the programme of preventive measures, including new types of medical care (specialized, including high-tech) and new, state-of-the-art treatment protocols. In 2022, a total of 928,900 patients received high-tech medical care under the basic programme of compulsory medical insurance. Financial support for cancer care has been increased.

214. In recent years, the basic compulsory health insurance programme has been reoriented towards preventive medicine, with a stronger focus on preventive measures, medical check-ups and the early detection of diseases. In 2022, the proportion of citizens undergoing preventive examinations rose to 46.3 per cent; and preventive measures were administered to 67.87 million people. In 2022, more than 6.3 million people infected with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) underwent advanced screening.

215. Concerted efforts are being made to digitalize the health-care sector. In 2022, a digital compulsory health insurance form was introduced and information can now be submitted via the single portal system.

I. Education, including human rights education (46, 232–235, 283)

216. General secondary education is provided free of charge in the Russian Federation, with the option of tuition in the pupils’ mother tongue and the study of their languages as separate subjects.

217. In all, 74 different languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation, including 22 languages of indigenous minorities, are taught in the general secondary education system. Teaching is conducted through the medium of eight different languages of peoples of the Russian Federation.

218. In the Russian Federation, the general availability and free accessibility of preschool, primary general, basic general and secondary general education and secondary vocational education are guaranteed, as is the possibility of receiving free higher education in higher educational establishments, which is funded by budgetary allocations from the federal budget awarded on a competitive basis.

219. In 2023, the availability of preschool education in the Russian Federation averaged 99.57 per cent for children from 2 months to 3 years of age and 99.79 per cent for children from 3 to 7 years of age.

220. Accessibility means that education should be not only affordable but also physically accessible – through the availability of educational institutions within a reasonable geographical distance or with access to modern technology. In other words, all children shall have equal access to State or municipal educational organizations, regardless of social, geographical or other circumstances.

221. Since 2013, the general education of children with disabilities in the Russian Federation has been organized in an inclusive format in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Over the reporting period, conditions for good quality and accessible education for children with hearing, vision, speech, motor and intellectual impairments have been created in more than 8,000 of the 40,000 preschool establishments operating in the Russian Federation and in more than 10,000 of its 45,000 schools.

222. Efforts are being made in the Russian Federation to heighten the legal literacy of the population, by raising awareness of human rights and ways to protect them.

223. Since 2017, the Russian Federation has been conducting a large-scale educational project known as the “One-stop class in human rights”, in which 32 million people have already participated.

224. The Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation organizes conferences, round tables and seminars aimed at raising awareness of human rights. Foreign ombudsmen and representatives of international organizations are invited to participate in these events.

225. The Commissioner’s office has issued bulletins, information leaflets and brochures containing information on human and civil rights and freedoms and the forms and means available for their protection.

226. New legal education formats are being actively introduced, such as e-museums, young people’s human rights chatbots and incubators of human rights initiatives for young people.

227. The Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation is carrying out activities to improve the legal literacy of certain vulnerable categories of the population, notably, people with disabilities, migrants and the elderly.

228. An initiative of particular note was Free Legal Aid Day, a special event for the elderly, including pensioners, veterans, and persons with disabilities, which was held in 2022, during which some 16,000 legal consultations were organized.

229. Since 2015, the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation has been cooperating with higher educational organizations offering a master’s degree programme entitled “International protection of human rights”, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

J. Rights of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples (72, 293–298, 302)

230. The population of the Russian Federation comprises more than 190 peoples and ethnic groups, who, under Russian law, have equal rights to maintain and develop their language,

culture and traditions. At the same time, the State provides additional support for the numerically small indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East, and also for other ethnic minorities.

231. In view of the vulnerability of their traditional lifestyles and habitats, and the small numbers of each of these indigenous peoples, a list has been drawn up under law of the preferences and benefits available to them relating to the use of natural resources and land, and also social support measures. In 2020, a procedure was approved for the provision of compensation for losses caused as a result of damage to the ancestral habitat of indigenous minorities by the economic activities of organizations and citizens. In 2020, a procedure was established for the registration of citizens belonging to numerically small indigenous minorities to ensure their social and economic rights.

232. The Constitution guarantees protection of the rights of indigenous minorities and recognizes that measures must be provided to meet the ethnocultural needs of these citizens.

233. In general educational establishments located in the republics of the Russian Federation, instruction and learning may be conducted in the official languages of those republics. Twenty languages are currently studied in the general education system as official languages of the republics of the Russian Federation.

234. The State provides assistance for the organization of various forms of preschool, primary general and basic general education in the native languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation.

235. At the same time, steps are being taken to enable certain categories of children to adapt to the educational syllabus, in particular the children of migrants, Roma children and children who have fallen behind because of illness. In order to improve the socialization of Roma children, additional educational programmes are carried out in schools and, in areas where there are Roma communities, teachers observe their festivals, hold parent meetings with them and take other measures to boost school attendance by their children. Professional development courses are organized for teaching staff to enable them to meet the challenges of teaching Roma and migrant children.

236. Systematic support measures are provided for all the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation. Over the period 2022–2023, reference books have been compiled on the native languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation. Among the educational programmes approved in 2023 there are 424 programmes in 57 languages. In 2022, a contest was held to identify the best teacher of a native language and native literature, in which teachers from 68 subjects took part in 30 languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation.

237. A separate area of the development of language and cultural policy is the inclusion of the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation in the information and digital space, and the development and creation of basic language technologies. For example, an interactive atlas has been prepared of the languages and cultures of the indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation, containing information on the historical, cultural, socio-anthropological and linguistic diversity of 30 such minorities, along with an educational portal for children from numerically small indigenous peoples of the Arctic, which, as of 2022, was accessible to 10.5 million people.

238. Special attention is paid to the languages of the indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation. In 2022, a range of measures were adopted to support the languages of the indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation. These included the publication of works of fiction, educational guidance and scientific literature, and support was provided for media publications issued in these languages. In 2022, support was provided for 19 publications in 11 languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation and 135 periodicals in 18 languages. Translations were made of 97 works in the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation into 32 foreign languages and an anthology was published of the literature of the peoples of the Russian Federation, entitled “Folk Wisdom”.

239. In 2022, a plan was approved of the principal activities for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages to be held in the Russian Federation over the period 2022–2032, with the aim of safeguarding the country’s cultural and linguistic diversity. As part of the plan, with the active participation of the Association of Indigenous Minorities of the North,

Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation, activities are being carried out to preserve and popularize the languages of the peoples of Russia.

240. In 2021, an interdepartmental commission on the languages of indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation was established, which reviewed the procedure for the expert appraisal of grammars setting out the rules of such languages, including their spelling and punctuation.

241. Numerous events are held to popularize the traditional culture of the peoples of the Russian Federation: these include folk contests, concerts, round tables, festivals, conferences and master classes. In 2022, in celebration of the Year of Cultural Heritage of the Peoples of the Russian Federation, a total of 180 events were organized, including 36 major cultural promotions.

242. With the aim of providing legal guarantees to safeguard the cultural identity of all peoples and ethnic communities of the Russian Federation and to preserve their ethnocultural and linguistic diversity, a federal act on the intangible ethnocultural heritage of the Russian Federation was adopted in 2022, designed to uphold the constitutional rights of citizens to participate in cultural life and to fulfil the constitutional obligation to ensure the preservation of the country's historical and cultural heritage.

243. Federal law sets out special guarantees to protect the rights of the numerically small indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation and systematic efforts are being made to enhance the law in this area. In 2022, gaps in the legal regulatory framework that provided opportunities for the unlawful enrichment of individuals at the expense of communities were closed, measures were taken to prevent the creation of so-called "fake communities", and attention was paid to the careful targeting of State support for indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation.

244. Assistance in ensuring that education is available to indigenous minorities is provided in a manner that takes due account of their nomadic way of life. In 2023, a federal act was adopted to create conditions for the numerically small indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation to receive preschool and primary general education in the places of their traditional residence and economic activities.
