

GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
**Human Rights Council**  
Fifty-Sixth Regular Session  
July 4, 2024

## Item 6: UPR outcomes

*Statement delivered by Mélanie Blondelle on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights - Check against delivery*

Mr. President,

Over the last two years, multiple UN human rights bodies raised alarm at the escalation of human rights violations in Tibet. This includes nearly one million Tibetan children separated from their families and forced into Mandarin dominated schools<sup>1</sup>; extensive forced labor transfer programs<sup>2</sup>; massive dislocation of the rural Tibetan population; and imprisonment of Tibetan environmental and human rights defenders<sup>3</sup>. Tibetans are routinely tortured, die in custody<sup>4</sup>, and are disappeared.<sup>5</sup>

An unprecedented number of states offered recommendations and submitted advance questions on Tibet, demonstrating the international community's dismay. We welcome this expression of genuine concern, which does not only acknowledge the situation on the ground, but also protects the credibility of the Human Rights Council itself.

China's predicted rejection of almost 70% of the 23 Tibet-specific recommendations and its listing of the remainder as 'accepted and already implemented', contradicts verified facts.

Several states and the EU called on China to provide independent and unfettered access to Tibet, including by UN OHCHR and Special Rapporteurs. China consistently blocks such access, opting instead to spread disinformation alleging social progress as justification for its oppressive tactics. The international community must see through this thinly veiled strategy and insist on the universality and indivisibility of human rights.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/02/china-un-experts-alarmed-separation-1-million-tibetan-children-families-and-https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FCHN%2FCO%2F3&Lang=en](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/02/china-un-experts-alarmed-separation-1-million-tibetan-children-families-and-https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FCHN%2FCO%2F3&Lang=en);  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FCHN%2FCO%2F9&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FCHN%2FCO%2F9&Lang=en)

<sup>2</sup> <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=27776>

<sup>3</sup> <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=28246>

<sup>4</sup> <https://tibetnetwork.org/free1/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/UPDATED-BRIEFING-DEATH-TORTURE-AND-ILL-TREATMENT-IN-CHINESE-CUSTODY-2.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26506>

We also stress that Tibetans in Tibet are not able to engage freely with UN mechanisms, foremost the UPR due to the pervasive climate of fear instilled by decades long oppression.

Despite this dire situation, options exist to achieve peaceful change. The Dalai Lama continues to pursue a path to invite dialogue and mutual understanding. The Chinese government should seize this opportunity, and the international community should press China, a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, to fully respect the rights of the Tibetan people and to address the root causes for the conflict on the plateau.

Tibet is a test of the UN Human Right Council's ability to uphold universal human rights, through the UPR and beyond. It is a test it must not fail.

Thank you.