

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Human Rights Council

Forty-fourth Regular Session

July 10, 2020

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

Statement delivered by Christa Meindersma on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

Mr. President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur for his report and his concerns about ‘closing civic space’. We are deeply concerned at the complete denial of such civic space to Tibetans by the People’s Republic of China to Tibetans.

9 Tibetans remain in prison for celebrating the 80th birthday of the Dalai Lama, 5 years ago. In May 2019, five UN experts questioned China over the charges brought against these political prisoners. In June this year, in a blatant show of disrespect for this Council’s Special Procedures, China responded accusing the Rapporteurs of “politicizing” human rights issues and using unsubstantiated information.

In November last year, 6 Tibetans were arrested for peacefully protesting in Kardze. The protests were sparked by distressing political campaigns imposed on local nomads whom the Chinese government had forced to give up their land and livelihoods. They remain in prison.

We are grateful to the Special Rapporteur for urging the UN to establish an independent and impartial mechanism to investigate human rights abuses in China and Tibet. We strongly support this call and urge the Council to set up such mechanism.

We call on China to allow Tibetans to peacefully assemble to express their culture and religion, and for any other legitimate purpose.

Thank you, Mr. President.