

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Human Rights Council
Forty-fifth Regular Session
September 18, 2020

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on arbitrary detention

Statement delivered by Kai Müller on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

Madam President,

We thank the Working Group for its report, and for stressing once again the lack of cooperation from a number of States in implementing its opinions.

In this regard, we would like to remind the Council of the case of detained Tibetan language rights advocate Tashi Wangchuk. In spite of an opinion of the Working Group in 2017 that found his detention to be in violation of international norms and called on China to release him,¹ he was convicted on trumped-up charges of “inciting separatism” in May 2018, and remains in jail to this day, where he is regularly denied access to his lawyer.

In June this year, a Chinese court also dismissed the appeal of Tibetan anti-corruption campaigner Anya Sengdra, only a month after the Working Group and four UN Special Rapporteurs called on China to lift charges against him.”²

Moreover, we call for the immediate release of the Tibetan monk Drugdra and eight others³ who have been detained and sentenced to prison terms to up to 14 years, for wanting to celebrate the 14th Dalai Lama’s birthday in 2015 and for offering support for persecuted Tibetans.

We call on Human Rights Council Members to press China to comply with its obligations under international law and to release Tashi Wangchuk, Anya Sengdra and all those arbitrarily detained simply for having peacefully exercised their fundamental rights.

Thank you.

¹ Opinion No.69/2017 concerning Tashi Wangchuk,

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session80/A_HRC_WGAD_2017_69_EN.docx

² UN experts urge China to drop charges against jailed Tibetan minority human rights defender, OHCHR, 19 May 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25894&LangID=E>

³ OHCHR, 10 May 2019, AL CHN 5/2019; International Campaign for Tibet, 18 July 2019, ‘UN Special Rapporteurs ask China for information about nine Tibetans imprisoned for celebrating Dalai Lama’s 80th birthday’.