

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Human Rights Council

Forty-fifth Regular Session

September 16, 2020

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

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 highlighting the urgency of the situation of disappeared persons whose whereabouts remain unknown.

In this regard, we express grave concern at the continued refusal by the Government of China to disclose the whereabouts of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama, who was disappeared at the age of 6, with his family, on 17 May 1995, this year 25 years ago.

The Chinese government's refusal to provide information and its disregard for the work of the Working Group, and more generally for United Nations Special Procedures, is deeply worrying, especially at a time when China is seeking re-election to the Human Rights Council.

We urge China to disclose the whereabouts of those being detained for having peacefully protested against the policies of the Chinese government in Tibet offline or online. They should be granted access to a lawyer of their choice, as well as to their families, and if needed, to adequate medical treatment.

We call on Human Rights Council Members to press China to comply with its obligations under international law, to allow a visit of the Working Group to China as requested since 2013, and provide information to the Working Group on the whereabouts of the Panchen Lama and other Tibetans who have disappeared simply for having exercised their fundamental rights.

Thank you.