

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**Human Rights Council**

Forty-eighth Regular Session

September 20, 2021

**Item 3: ID with the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention**

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

Madam President,

We thank the Working Group for its report (A/HRC/48/55) and would like to strongly support its recommendations, and, in particular, the call on states to respond positively to requests for country visits.

We note that the Working Group's last visit to the People's Republic of China dates back to 1997. Given the numerous reports about cases of arbitrary detention of Tibetans, Uyghurs, Chinese human rights defenders and others, the failure of the Chinese government to respond to the outstanding requests is unacceptable.

Tibetans continue to be arbitrarily detained for practicing their religious beliefs, for voicing dissent with government policies or for defending their rights.

We welcome the recent communication of four UN Special Procedures in the cases of the Tibetans Rinchen Tsultrim and Go Sherab Gyatso, who are detained and have been 'disappeared' for merely exercising their right to freedom of speech.<sup>1</sup>

We also call on the Chinese government to release the Tibetan Dorjee Tashi who is serving a life sentence. Only now, his testimony on severe torture suffered during pre-trial detention has become available to the outside world.<sup>2</sup>

We note with serious concern reports about an ongoing wave of arrests of Tibetans in Kardze prefecture in Sichuan province amid a crackdown by authorities on language rights and possession of images of the Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.<sup>3</sup>

We call on governments to raise these cases bilaterally with the Chinese government and publicly call for an end of arbitrary detention of Tibetans, Uyghurs, Chinese human rights defenders and others.

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<sup>1</sup> OHCHR, AL CHN 7/2021.

<sup>2</sup> International Campaign for Tibet, August 16, 2021, "Testimony reveals pre-trial torture of Tibetan businessman-philanthropist".

<sup>3</sup> Radio Free Asia, September 7, 2021, "Eight More Tibetans are Arrested in Sichuan Over Dalai Lama Photos, Language Rights".

Thank you.