

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Human Rights Council

Forty-eighth Regular Session

September 21, 2021

Item 3: ID with the Working Group on Involuntary and Enforced Disappearance

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/48/57) and would like to strongly support its recommendations. We note that the Working Group has had to add 64 new cases of disappearance in the People's Republic of China during the reporting period.

We also note that the Working Group has not been able to visit the PRC, as the Chinese government has not responded to its request dating February 2013, despite several reminders. The failure of the Chinese government to respond to the outstanding request is unacceptable.

Tibetans continue to be arbitrarily detained for practicing their religious beliefs, for voicing dissent with government policies or for defending their rights. 'Disappearance' of Tibetans is part of a pattern of repression with the aim to suppress dissent and independent thought.

We welcome the recent communication of four UN Special Procedures, among them this Working Group, 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.¹ We are particularly concerned about the fate of the Tibetan Go Sherab Gyatso whose whereabouts remain unknown.

We reiterate our concern with regard to the "disappearance" of the Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima who has been abducted by the Chinese government in 1995 and who has been subject to numerous inquiries by independent United Nations Special Procedures and bodies.

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

Thank you.

¹ OHCHR, AL CHN 7/2021.