

GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
**Human Rights Council**  
Fiftieth Regular Session  
June 22, 2022

**Item 3: ID With the Special Rapporteur on the right to education**

*Statement delivered by Vincent Metten on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights*

Mr. President,

Under President Xi Jinping's leadership, the Chinese government has implemented a harmful boarding school system that separates Tibetan children from their families and enforces Chinese-language education. With this attack on the root of Tibetan society, parents now fear that their language, culture, religion and identity will be erased in one generation.

Recent reports by the International Campaign for Tibet<sup>1</sup> and the Tibet Action Institute<sup>2</sup> reveal China's vast network of boarding schools for students from the age of 4 years across Tibet and beyond. Across Tibet, at least 800,000 Tibetan children aged 6 to 18 are living in such schools, three out of every four Tibetan students in this age group. Another 100,000 children aged four to six live in pre-school boarding schools.

Students live separated from their families and are subjected to highly politicized education in Chinese. Although the Chinese government regularly claim to employ a "bilingual education" model in Tibetan areas, in reality students receive Chinese-language instruction, with one optional Tibetan language class. As a result, Tibetan students become strangers to their families and communities, and subsequently their culture.

Parents who withhold children from these schools are punished economically and blacklisted.

China's boarding school policy is discriminatory and violates multiple international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as China's own domestic laws.

We urge UN Member states to call on China to halt its implementation of boarding schools in Tibet.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> International Campaign for Tibet, *Tibetans sent to mainland Chinese schools under guise of "progress"*, January 12, 2021, <https://savetibet.org/tibetans-sent-to-mainland-chinese-schools-under-guise-of-progress>.

<sup>2</sup> Tibet Action Institute, *Separated From Their Families, Hidden From The World: China's Vast System of Colonial Boarding Schools Inside Tibet*, December 2021, [https://s7712.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2021\\_ColonialBoardingSchoolReport\\_Digital.pdf](https://s7712.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2021_ColonialBoardingSchoolReport_Digital.pdf)