

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Human Rights Council

Fifty-second Regular Session

March 14, 2023

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

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

Mr. President,

We thank the Special rapporteur for his report A/HRC/52/30 and welcome strengthened protocols around the world to ensure acts of torture are not met with impunity.

We are particularly alarmed by the continued and blatant use of torture against Tibetans by the People's Republic of China. As concluded by the Committee Against Torture, "the practice of torture and ill treatment is still deeply entrenched in the criminal justice system."¹ Distressingly, this statement by the Committee on China from 2015 is still relevant today.

Torture is routinely inflicted to silence, permanently injure and even cause death when Tibetans are arbitrarily detained for peacefully expressing their opinion or practicing their religion. A dangerous pattern of death due to torture² has been observed, including the recent deaths of 19-year-old monk Tenzin Nyima³ and 51-year old tour guide Kunchok Jinpa⁴. We emphasize that in both cases, as with many others, an investigation into deaths in custody and a prosecution of those responsible for them was never undertaken by the Chinese authorities.

Given this pattern, we are concerned for the wellbeing of Dorjee Tashi, who is serving a life sentence for "loan fraud". His testimony of torture endured while in Chinese detention reveals in concrete terms the pervasive culture of impunity.

¹ International Campaign for Tibet, 9 December 2015, 'U.N. Committee against Torture calls China to account for "deeply entrenched" torture and ill-treatment', <https://savetibet.org/u-n-committee-against-torture-calls-china-to-account-for-deeply-entrenched-torture-and-ill-treatment/>.

² International Campaign for Tibet, 2015, 'Torture and Impunity – 29 Cases of Tibetan Political Prisoners', <https://savetibet.org/torture-and-impunity-29-cases-of-tibetan-political-prisoners/>.

³ Human Rights Watch, 21 January 2021, 'China: Tibetan Monk Dies from Beating in Custody', <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/01/21/china-tibetan-monk-dies-beating-custody>.

⁴ Human Rights Watch, 16 February 2021, 'China: Tibetan Tour Guide Dies from Prison Injuries', <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/16/china-tibetan-tour-guide-dies-prison-injuries>.

We urge the Special Rapporteur on torture to investigate this pattern of death by torture during CCP detention. The international community must hold those responsible for acts of torture and abuse to account. We also call on all member states to refocus energies on eliminating torture, especially in countries, such as China, that are party to the Convention Against Torture.

Thank you.