

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Human Rights Council

Fifty-Seventh Regular Session

September 17, 2024

Item 3: ID With the Working Group on Arbitrary detention

*Statement delivered by Kai Müller on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
Check against delivery*

Mr. President,

We thank the Working Group for its report, and for the work undertaken by its members regarding the situation in the People's Republic of China. We take note of the four opinions¹ and two urgent appeals addressed to China in 2023, and regret that the Chinese government has failed to reply to them, demonstrating once again its lack of cooperation with UN Special Procedures.

In Tibet, arbitrary detention continues to be used to persecute those who peacefully assemble to protest government policies and projects. In this regard, we recall the protests last February against the planned Kamtok (Gangtuo) hydropower project that will submerge and affect at least two villages and six monasteries. Several hundreds of Tibetans were arrested, and while many have since been released, there is no information available about at least two high profile protesters - Tenzin Sangpo and Tenzin – who remained in detention, while they have done nothing more than exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. We welcome the communication by 13 Special Procedures addressed to China on this matter on 8 July 2024² and co-signed by Vice-Chair on Communications of the Working Group Ms. Ganna Yudkivska.

We would also like to draw the attention of the Working Group to the case of Tibetan singer Palden, who was arbitrarily detained and later sentenced to three years in prison in a secret trial last year.³ Chinese authorities arrested him for the lyrics of a song he performed, and he has been held incommunicado since then. His detention is part of a pattern of Tibetan intellectuals and artists targeted for expressing their opinions and thoughts on Tibetan national identity and culture.

We call on the Working Group to continue to include these and other cases of Tibetans in its future opinions addressed to the Chinese government, and on members of the Council to urge China to release all Tibetans arbitrarily detained simply for having peacefully exercised their fundamental rights.

¹ Opinions 6, 30, 38, 77.

² AL CHN 8/2024, OHCHR, 8 July 2024,

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gld=29120>.

³ *Tibetan singer Palden sentenced to three years in prison as China intensifies constraints on freedom of expression*, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 4 December 2023, <https://tchrd.org/tibetan-singer-palden-sentenced-to-three-years-in-prison-as-china-intensifies-constraints-on-freedom-of-expression/>.

Thank you.