

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Human Rights Council

Fifty-eighth Regular Session

March 6, 2025

Item 3: ID with the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights

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

Mr. President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur for her report and her work towards the protection of cultural rights across the world, in particular for joining a powerful communication to the Chinese government last year, raising concerns with regard to Tibetan protests against a tremendously harmful hydropower project in the Tibetan area of Derge. Tibet faces hundreds of dam projects that could displace 1.2 million Tibetans, destroy sacred sites, and threaten 1.8 billion people downstream. Such projects not only degrade Tibet's unique environment but also drive climate chaos with global repercussions.¹

In addition, the systematic erosion of Tibetan identity through forced assimilation in Chinese state-run boarding schools is deeply worrying. About one million Tibetan children face separation from their families, suppression of their language and identity, and indoctrination into Communist Party ideology.

Lastly, I would like to raise with urgency: As the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday approaches in July 2025, Tibetans are preparing to celebrate. In the past, Tibetans in Tibet have been detained and sentenced to prison merely for marking the birthday of their deeply revered religious leader. States must urge the Chinese government to respect the rights of these Tibetans. They must not be persecuted.

We urge the international community to demand China respect Tibetan cultural rights. Tibet's environment, its cultural heritage, its language and religion must be protected.

Thank you.

¹ International Campaign for Tibet, 5 December 2024, "China's hydropower dam expansion destroys Tibetan homes and temples, stands to displace 1.2 million people, and drives climate change", <https://savetibet.org/chinas-hydropower-dam-expansion-destroys-tibetan-homes-and-temples-stands-to-displace-1-2-million-people-and-drives-climate-change/>.