



GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Human Rights Council
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Item 3: ID With the Special Rapporteur on the rights to peaceful assembly and of association

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

Mr. President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur for her report.

As the 14th Dalai Lama approaches his 90th birthday on July 6, this should be a moment of celebration for Tibetans and Buddhists worldwide. Yet inside Tibet, even marking this peaceful occasion remains a criminalized act.

We recall the ongoing imprisonment of three Tibetan monks from Kirti Monastery – Drugdra, Lobsang Khedrub, and Lobsang Gephel – sentenced respectively to 14, 13, and 12 years in prison for organizing a simple celebration of the Dalai Lama’s 80th birthday in 2015. Ten years later, they remain behind bars, denied medical care and contact to their families.

This constitutes a clear violation of international law, notably Article 18 of both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion – including the freedom to manifest one’s religion through worship, observance, and practice.

Since 1991, several UN Special Rapporteurs have expressed concern over China’s interference in Tibetan religious affairs, including the enforced disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama and Beijing’s attempts to control reincarnation processes.

We urge the Chinese government to release these three monks and all Tibetans detained for peacefully exercising their fundamental rights. We further call on all States to defend the right of Tibetans to freely honor their spiritual leader without fear of reprisal.

Thank you.