



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Human Rights Council

Sixtieth Regular Session

September 16, 2025

Item 3: ID With the Working Group on arbitrary detention

*Statement delivered by Mélanie Blondelle on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
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Mr. President,

We thank the Working Group for its report.

On 6 July, Tibetans and Buddhist practitioners worldwide celebrated the 90th birthday of the Dalai Lama. Yet, Tibetans in Tibet were denied even this small freedom. A striking example is Asang, a young singer detained for weeks simply because he had performed a song in honor of the revered spiritual leader. As he remains under constant surveillance and has been barred from using social media, his situation can be described as “Non-Release Release”.¹ His case adds to those of the imprisoned monks Drugdra, Lobsang Khedrup and Lobsang Gephel.²

We are also gravely concerned about the cases of two senior monks, Sherab and Gonpo Tsering, who were sentenced last year to three and four years in prison for peacefully protesting against the planned Kamtok dam, a project which threatens to displace thousands and destroy sacred sites. Reports that Gonpo has been tortured in detention, leaving him blind and unable to speak, are deeply alarming.³

¹ “Tibetan singer on restricted release after broadcasting a song celebrating the Dalai Lama’s 90th birthday”, International Campaign for Tibet, 2 September 2025, <https://savetibet.org/tibetan-singer-on-restricted-release-after-broadcasting-a-song-celebrating-the-dalai-lamas-90th-birthday/>

² “Celebrating in Fear”, International Campaign for Tibet, June 2025, https://savetibet.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Celebrating_in_fear_final_draft.pdf

³ “Head of Tibetan monastery in critical condition after torture following dam protest”, Tibet Watch, 23 June 2025, <https://tibetwatch.org/head-of-tibetan-monastery-in-critical-condition-after-torture-following-dam-protest/>

These cases reflect a systematic effort by Chinese authorities to silence dissent and erase Tibetan identity.

Mr. President, no one should be punished for honoring their religious leader or protecting their cultural heritage.

We urge this Council to demand the immediate release of Sherab, Gonpo Tsering, Drugdra, Lobsang Khedrup and Lobsang Gephel, and all Tibetans arbitrarily detained simply for exercising their universal rights, and to hold China accountable for its ongoing violations in Tibet.

Thank you.