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The United States, Canada and European government express concerns about Tibet at UN Human Rights Council

Geneva - The United States, Canada, the European Union and a number of European governments expressed strong concerns about the human rights situation in Tibet today in their item 4 statements to the ongoing 37th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council.

Among the countries specifically raising Tibet in their statements were Bulgaria, Canada, France, Germany and the United States. Bulgaria's statement – made on behalf of the European Union- was supported by a number of states, including Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Slovenia.

Speaking under the key Item 4 "Human rights situations that require the Council's attention," the governments delegations to the Human Rights Council expressed alarm at the ongoing violations of the fundamental rights of Tibetans, saying they were incompatible with China's national and international commitments. Many also called on China to release all those detained solely for exercising or protecting fundamental rights –some explicitly mentioning the case of Tibetan language rights advocate Tashi Wangchuk.

Concerns about Tibet were also raised on a number of other occasions during this session -which coincides with the 10th anniversary of the 2008 protests in Tibet-including by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [who noted that his office](#) "continues to receive urgent appeals regarding arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, ill-treatment and discrimination" of Tibetans. The EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Mr Stavros Lambrinidis also [raised the case of Tashi Wangchuk](#) during the High Level Segment.

In addition to official statements today, ICT's Policy and Advocacy Officer Mélanie Blondelle delivered a statement on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) under item 4, highlighting the dramatic deteriorating of the human rights situation in Tibet since 2008. She said that the continuing wave of self-immolations in Tibet was "clear evidence" that Tibetans inside Tibet were still suffering from China's disrespect for their fundamental rights and freedoms, and urged the Council's members to "strengthen their individual and joint efforts to address the Chinese government's harmful policies and human rights abuses in Tibet" in the year of China's third Universal Periodic Review.

Following are the full remarks of States who raised specific concerns about the situation in Tibet, as well as the full text of Mélanie Blondelle's statement.

Canada: *"The government of China's ongoing persecution of religious and ethnic minorities, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet, is incompatible with its international obligations, as well as its Constitution. We urge authorities to immediately release all individuals detained for exercising their human rights, including their right to freedom of religion and expression, and to protect advocates for linguistic and cultural rights. The lack of transparency and due process in the cases of thousands of Uyghurs detained in so-called "re-*

education camps”, and in the cases of detained human rights defenders throughout the country, continues to call into question China’s commitment to the rule of law.”

European Union: “While acknowledging the progress made on a number of areas of social and economic rights in China, the EU is concerned about detentions and trials of human rights defenders and lawyers Wang Quanzhang, Li Yuhan, Huang Qi, Yu Wensheng, Wu Gan and **Tashi Wangchuk**. The EU urges China to release all detained human rights defenders and to thoroughly investigate reported cases of mistreatment and torture while in detention. The EU is also concerned about the continued detention of the Swedish citizen Gui Minhai. The EU demands that he be allowed to meet Swedish diplomatic and medical staff and that he be released. The EU calls upon China to respect the rights of freedom of expression offline and online, and of religion, as well as cultural diversity, **not least in Tibet and Xinjiang.**”

France (unofficial translation by ICT): “(...) civil society actors and political opponents are too often arrested, repressed, harassed and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of opinion and expression are too often, in contravention to our collective commitments. It is also the case in China, where **we are also concerned by the human rights situation in Tibet and Xinjiang**, where we call for dialogue with local populations.”

Germany: “We remain deeply worried about China’s widespread abuses, including infringements on the freedoms of religion, expression and association, and the right to a fair trial, manifest in the secret detention called “residential surveillance in a designated location”. We urge China to immediately release all human rights defenders, including Yu Wensheng, Li Yuhan, Jiang Tianyong, Wang Quanzhang, Wu Gan, Liu Feiyue, Huang Qi, Lu Yuyu, **Tashi Wangchuk**, Ilham Tohti, and EU-citizen Gui Minhai, and to **allow visits of UN Special Procedures, including in Tibetan and Uyghur areas.**”

United States: “We remain troubled by reports that lawyers and activists, including [Wang Quanzhang, Jiang Tianyong, Li Yuhan, Yu Wensheng, and Huang Qi; and] foreign nationals, [including Swedish citizen Gui Minhai,] in China are being arbitrarily detained, tortured, and forced to confess to political charges on state media, and that in many cases, authorities have retaliated against their families. **Additionally, we are concerned about harsh conditions akin to martial law that have been imposed in Xinjiang and some Tibetan areas.**”

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Human Rights Council
Thirty-seventh Regular Session**

March 14, 2018

Item 4: General Debate - Human rights situations that require the Council’s attention

Statement delivered by Mélanie Blondelle on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR)

Mr. President,

Ten years ago almost to the day, an unprecedented wave of protests began in Tibet. From 10 March 2008, Tibetans from all walks of life participated in hundreds of largely peaceful demonstrations against Chinese rule, calling for the Dalai Lama to be allowed to come home and for their human rights to be upheld.

Since then, China has intensified repression and imposed pervasive military and security controls on the plateau, in order to stifle any challenge to its rule. This has been combined with attacks on Tibetan

identity and culture and gross human rights violations, both of civil and political rights, and of economic, social and cultural rights.

The Chinese government has also strictly controlled information about and access to Tibet; this year again, the Tibetan Autonomous Region is closed to foreigners for around a month around the sensitive anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising of 10 March 1959.

But the continuing wave of self-immolations, with more than 153 Tibetans setting themselves on fire since 2009, is a clear evidence that Tibetans are still suffering from China's disrespect for their fundamental rights and freedoms. The most recent case took place just a week ago, when a man named Tsekho Tugchak died after self-immolating in Ngaba.

Mr. President, China's refusal to address these concerns over the years, and its lack of cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms, threaten the credibility of the Human Rights Council. As the country prepares for its next Universal Periodic Review, we therefore urge the Council's members to strengthen their individual and joint efforts to address the Chinese government's harmful policies and human rights abuses in Tibet.

Thank you.