

<https://www.savetibet.org/un-human-rights-council-informed-that-chinas-revised-regulations-on-religion-are-a-further-threat-to-survival-of-tibetan-buddhism-in-tibet/>

UN Human Rights Council informed that China's revised regulations on religion are a further threat to survival of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet

In a statement delivered on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights at the ongoing 37th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on March 2, 2018, ICT's Kai Mueller drew the Council's attention to China's revised regulations on religion, in effect since February 1, 2018, are a further threat to the continued survival of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet.

Speaking under Agenda Item 3 "Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development", he said that in November 2016, six UN special mandate holders expressed their "grave concern" over the "serious repression of the Buddhist Tibetans' cultural and religious practices and learning" in the Buddhist institutes of Larung Gar and Yachen Gar.

He said that the Council should ask China to "refrain from intervening with religious activities that are protected by principles of freedom of religion or belief."

Following is the full text of Kai Mueller's statement.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY Human Rights Council Thirty-seventh Regular Session

March 2, 2018

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue - Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief

Statement delivered by Kai Mueller on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR)

Mr. President,

We wish to thank the Special Rapporteur for his report (A/HRC/37/49) and commend the Special Rapporteur and his office for the work undertaken for the protection of religious freedom or belief.

In September 2016, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reiterated his deep concern over "allegations of discrimination, torture and ill-treatment, enforced disappearances and deaths in custody of members of ethnic and religious communities" in the People's Republic of China.¹

¹ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Opening Statement by Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, at the 33rd session of the Human Rights Council, www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20474.

Referring to the High Commissioner's concerns, we wish to highlight policies and laws adopted by the People's Republic of China which constitute a serious threat to religious freedom or belief.

Revised Chinese government regulations on religion, in effect since February 1, 2018, consolidate far-reaching powers of the Communist Party state over people's lives and beliefs, and are a further threat to the continued survival of - for example - Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet. While they intend to regulate almost every aspect of religious life, in addition, the revised rules conflate peaceful religious practice with 'threats' to China's security, creating a more dangerous political environment for monks, nuns, and lay Buddhists.²

In November 2016, six United Nations special mandate holders expressed their "grave concern" over the "serious repression of the Buddhist Tibetans' cultural and religious practices and learning" in the Buddhist institutes of Larung Gar and Yachen Gar.³ We are concerned that despite many concerns raised by the international community, also in this body, the situation at Larung Gar and Yachen Gar remains unsatisfactory and deeply worrisome, as massive state intervention at these sites continues to violate the freedom of religion of Buddhist practitioners.

We therefore ask all members of the Human Rights Council to urge the Chinese government to respect internationally accepted standards of freedom of religion or belief, and therefore to bring Chinese laws in conformity with international rights standards, and to refrain from intervening with religious activities that are protected by principles of freedom of religion or belief.

Thank you, Mr. President.

² International Campaign for Tibet, October 25, 2016: "Suffocating religious freedom in Tibet: China's draft regulations on religious affairs"; International Campaign for Tibet, September 18, 2017: "China's revised religious regulations threaten survival of Tibetan Buddhism".

³ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Joint Submission, November 7, 2016, reference: AL CHN 10/2016.