



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

UN human rights experts ask China to lift charges against Tibetan anti-corruption activist Anya Sengdra

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Four UN human rights experts and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention have urged the Chinese government to drop charges against Tibetan environmental activist and human rights defender Anya Sengdra (also written as A-nya Sengdra). Sengdra was sentenced to seven years in December 2019 for "provoking agitation" and gathering people "to disrupt public order." He had appealed the sentence and the hearing was scheduled on April 27, 2020 before the Golog (Chinese: Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Intermediate Court, Qinghai Province, but the hearing was postponed and there is no information on a new date.

The UN human rights experts were concerned that Sengdra's "legitimate work" would be criminalized. They also expressed concern about reports of deterioration in his physical and mental health while in detention. Sengdra's rights and the rights of the Tibetan minority should be "fully respected." China must comply with its international law obligation, which includes removing the charges against Sengdra, the experts said.

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) welcomes the request of the UN human rights experts: "Anya Sengdra's arrest and sentencing are part of the systematic suppression of social engagement, religious or cultural expression in Tibet that is not party-controlled or against abuses by the authorities. For example, the authorities in Tibet have been using a country-wide campaign against gang crime to tackle dissenters and activists like Anya Sengdra since 2018."

Anya Sengdra has been a staunch campaigner against government corruption since at least 2014, when he and other local Tibetan nomads founded a voluntary organization called "Mangdon Ling" ("Public Affairs Forum") to fight against local authorities' abuse of power. He criticized local officials for siphoning off and misusing public money, notably from relocated nomads, and ran campaigns against illegal mining activities and the hunting and poaching of endangered animals.

The UN human rights experts are Fernand de Varennes, Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Leigh Toomey (Chair-Rapporteur), Elina Steinerte (Vice-Chair), José Antonio Guevara Bermúdez, Sètondji Roland Adjovi and Mr. Seong-Phil Hong, Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; David Kaye, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; and Nils Melzer, Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.



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