



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

UN council urged to address worsening human rights in Tibet

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September 30, 2021

At the 48th regular session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva this week, Mélanie Blondelle delivered a statement on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights urging the council to pay more attention to the worsening human rights situation in Tibet and to take concerted efforts to address it.

Speaking under Item 4, “Human rights situations that require the Council’s attention,” Blondelle called on stakeholders “to take, more seriously, what represents a sustained attack on the integrity of human rights conventions, and an onslaught on a culture that is world heritage.” She added that they should “actively work” to implement the recommendation of 50 UN experts from June 2020 to establish a special independent mechanism to monitor and investigate human rights violations by the Chinese government.

Concerns about Tibet were also raised under this item by several delegations, including Denmark, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States. France also delivered a statement on behalf of 26 member states of the European Union that called on China to comply with its obligations under international and national law and to respect human rights, including in Tibet.

Below are the full remarks of states that expressed concerns about the situation in Tibet, as well as the full text of Mélanie Blondelle’s statement.

Countries’ statements

Denmark: “With respect to China, we continue to be deeply concerned about reports of human rights violations in Xinjiang and Tibet. We reiterate our call on China to allow meaningful access to Xinjiang for the High Commissioner and other independent observers.”

Germany: “In China, we are gravely concerned about systematic human rights violations, especially against ethnic minorities in Xinjiang and Tibet. The High Commissioner must be granted unfettered access to Xinjiang. We welcome her announcement to present her findings to date and encourage an early publication.”

Netherlands: “In China, we remain seriously concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang and Tibet, and the restrictions on press freedom and the freedom of religion and belief. We regret the lack of progress in granting immediate, meaningful and unfettered access to the Office of the High Commissioner to Xinjiang and look forward to her assessment of the situation. Furthermore, we remain concerned about the implementation of the national security law in Hong Kong.”

Sweden: “The human rights situation in China remains concerning, not least in Xinjiang, Hongkong and Tibet. Human rights violations target persons belonging to minorities, human rights defenders, lawyers and media workers. The continued arbitrary detention of Swedish and EU citizen Gui Minhai must end.”

Switzerland: “Switzerland strongly condemns the continued arbitrary detention of Uighurs and other minorities in Xinjiang, China. Switzerland calls for their release as well as respect for the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, including in Tibet.”

United States: “We strongly condemn China’s abuse – including economic exploitation, systemic racism, and destruction of cultural heritage – directed toward members of ethnic and religious minority groups, including

genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang and extreme restrictions on human rights and on religious, linguistic, and cultural traditions in Tibet. We condemn Hong Kong authorities' detention of democratic activists simply for exercising their rights and freedoms and call for their immediate release."

France (unofficial translation by the International Campaign for Tibet): "In Xinjiang, alarming information continues to reach us. We have the duty to establish the facts. Following the declaration by China agreeing to a visit of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, we reiterate our call so that a free and independent access be given to her to this territory. We also deplore the worsening of the situation in Hong Kong and Tibet."

France on behalf of 26 member states of the European Union (full written version): "On the human rights situation in China, which remains of serious concern, we reiterate our call on China to comply with its obligations under national and international law to respect and protect human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet and in Inner Mongolia. We continue to be gravely concerned about the existence of a large network of political re-education camps, widespread surveillance, systemic restrictions on freedom of religion or belief against Uighurs and other persons belonging to minorities, as well as by evidence-based reports about forced labour, forced sterilisation, forced birth control and sexual and gender based violence. We encourage the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to address the human rights situation in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), including through an independent, objective, impartial and transparent assessment of the situation. Furthermore, we call upon UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies, in particular the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, to review the application of the core human rights treaties, including in XUAR. We also call on China to ratify without delay the ICCPR, and ILO Conventions No 29 (including its 2014 protocol) and 105 on Forced Labour. We are increasingly concerned about growing restrictions on the exercise of freedom of expression and media freedom, access to information, intimidation and surveillance of journalists and media workers, as well as about unlawful detention, sentencing and enforced disappearance of independent reporters. We urge China to ensure full respect for the rule of law, to establish fair trial and due process guarantees and to investigate thoroughly reported cases of arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment, and harassment of human rights defenders and their families, as well as to discontinue the practice of the Residential Surveillance in a Designed Location (RSDL). We are gravely concerned about detentions, trials and sentencing of human rights defenders, lawyers, and intellectuals, including Yu Wensheng, Qin Yongmin, Gao Zhisheng, Sakharov Prize laureate Ilham Tohti, Huang Qi, Tiyip Tashpolat, Li Yuhuan, Wu Gan, Liu Feiyue, Pastor Wang Yi, Cheng Yuan, Liu Dazhi, Wuge Jianxiong, Ding Jiayi, Xu Zhiyong, Zhang Zhan, Fang Bin, Guo Quan, Chen Jianfang, Chang Weiping, Wang Zang, Li Qiaochu and Qin Yongpei. We call for their immediate release, as well as for the immediate release of EU citizen Gui Minhai. His rights, including inter alia to consular access and due process, have not been respected. In relation to Hong Kong, we remain gravely concerned about changes to the electoral system and the repressive National Security Law and in particular its lack of safeguards and its extraterritorial provisions. Since the imposition of this legislation, the exercise of fundamental freedoms that were supposed to remain protected until 2047, respect for human rights, democratic principles, and the political pluralism that are central to Hong Kong's identity and prosperity, have been substantially eroded, especially the freedom of the press and the independence of the judiciary. We urge the authorities in Beijing and Hong Kong government to respect the Hong Kong's rule of law, human rights, democratic principles, independent judiciary and high degree of autonomy under the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle, as enshrined in the Hong Kong Basic Law and in line with domestic and international obligations. This is especially important in the context of the upcoming council elections."

Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights statement

GENERAL ASSEMBLY Human Rights Council Forty-eighth Regular Session September 24, 2021

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

Statement delivered on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

Madam President,

Last month, the People's Republic of China (PRC) organised festivities in Lhasa in celebration of the 70th anniversary of its so-called "peaceful liberation of Tibet". The tightly scripted ceremonies stood in stark contrast to the reality on the ground.

The Chinese government continues to implement policies of "sinicization" in Tibet, which have a tremendously negative impact on Tibetan culture and on the rights of Tibetans. Dissent, independent thought, and local community activism is persecuted relentlessly, and Tibetan culture is subjected to ideological transformation. We urge all stakeholders to take, more seriously, what represents a sustained attack on the integrity of human rights conventions, and an onslaught on a culture that is world heritage.

We continue to call for unfettered access and an opening up of Tibet. The lack of access to Tibet should have consequences, especially as the Chinese government strengthens its efforts to manipulate public opinion. Unfettered access facilitates transparency and accountability, and the protection of human rights.

The Human Rights Council needs to take concerted efforts to address the policies implemented by the PRC, and it must pay attention to the worsening situation in Tibet. We remain concerned about the apparent lack of support for the unprecedented June 2020 call by UN Special Procedures for the creation of a special independent mechanism to monitor and investigate human rights violations by the Chinese government. All stakeholders should voice their support and actively work to implement the recommendations.

Thank you.



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