



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Ahead of important UN review, ICT calls for end to forced relocations, coercive policies in Tibet

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Ahead of China's review before the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights this week, the International Campaign for Tibet calls for an end to mass forced relocations and policies that coerce Tibetans under the pretext of development and environmental protection.

In a joint submission to the Committee, ICT and the Loyola Law School also raise serious concerns about educational policies in Tibet, which reportedly have led to the separation of hundreds of thousands of Tibetan children from their families and their culture. On 6 February, three independent UN human rights experts warned that around 1 million Tibetan children were being affected by Chinese government policies aimed at assimilating Tibetan people culturally, religiously and linguistically through a residential school system.

The submission further raises the persecution of Tibetan environmental defenders and human rights defenders, such as Anya Sengdra and Karma Samdrup, who have been detained by Chinese authorities solely for their peaceful advocacy for the environment and against corruption.

ICT and Loyola Law School's submission highlights forced resettlement policies by the Chinese government that have led to the relocation of a large part of the Tibetan population. Estimates indicate around 2 million Tibetans have been subjected to these programs in the past years.

Coercive policies

The submission particularly raises concerns regarding the lack of access to justice and the coercive nature of the programs through the withdrawal of government services, dedicated communal and individual "thought work" and the offer of financial incentives and threats of punishments.

Similarly, ICT and Loyola Law School, in their submission, are concerned about reports of coercive labor programs in Tibet that entail the transfer and labor training of Tibetans, again without access to justice and an independent judiciary.

Chinese government violations

Kai Mueller, head of ICT's UN Advocacy, said: "The Chinese government implements policies in Tibet, on the pretext of either social, economic or environmental goals, which have an enormous impact on the lives of Tibetans. International law requires minimum standards set out by the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which has been ratified by the Chinese government. We are calling on the Chinese government to adhere to their legal obligations, which means to immediately stop and review relocation, labor and educational policies that are discriminatory, coercive and thus in violation of the Covenant."

ICT also notes the large number of reports submitted to the Committee by so-called GONGOs ("Government Organized Non-Governmental Organisations"), or fake NGOs, which apparently seek to undermine civil

society participation and parrot Chinese government positions. ICT has identified more than 20 groups with an apparent connection to the Chinese government.

Kai Mueller said: “While it is no surprise to witness the Chinese government attempting to undermine civil society participation once again, the number of GONGO submissions this time represents a new low and makes a mockery of the UN system. China should be called out for such blatantly destructive behavior at the United Nations.”



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