



General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 September 2024

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-seventh session

9 September–9 October 2024

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Asian Dignity Initiative, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 August 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Human Rights in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), China and other Tibetan Autonomous Areas in China

The government of China continues to perpetrate severe human rights abuses, including arbitrary detention, torture, religious repression, and a widespread crackdown on freedoms of expression, culture, and linguistic rights. The party-state justifies its stringent cultural assimilation policies under the guise of promoting "ethnic unity" and "building a modern socialist state." In pursuit of a unified Chinese national identity—monolingual and loyal to the party-state—Tibetans face arbitrary detention on a daily basis and are often tortured in undisclosed locations for extended periods, without access to legal representation and fair trial.

Vaguely worded laws and regulations have been enacted to enforce Chinese-medium education, eliminate alternative Tibetan-language education, and embed party ideology and propaganda within the state education system. Chinese police and state security agents wield discretionary power to detain and disappear Tibetans on mere suspicion of committing national security offences, often without legal grounds or due process. Tibetans suspected of political crimes are frequently held in secret locations without their families' knowledge, leaving them susceptible to torture and mistreatment.

Despite these extreme risks, Tibetan human rights defenders and activists continue to display extraordinary courage and determination in challenging the Chinese party-state's propaganda in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), China. This resistance is prevalent across all segments of Tibetan society as it is evidenced below .

On 26 January 2023, a senior Tibetan Buddhist scholar known for his mediation died in police custody in Lithang County, Kardze Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, TAR, China . Geshe Phende Gyaltzen, 56, had been detained in March 2022 for his active involvement in the renovation of Shedrub Dhargyeling monastery in Lithang. He had been in good health before his detention. Severe restrictions were imposed immediately after his passing, including warning residents in Lithang not to speak with outsiders. Local Tibetans were barred from paying their last respects to the monk's body. His family members were denied the opportunity to perform last rites. [2]

In November 2023, a young Tibetan singer named Palden was sentenced on an unknown date a few months after his detention earlier in 2023 in Golog (Ch: Guluo) Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, TAR, China . The singer was apprehended after he shared a patriotic Tibetan song on the Chinese video sharing platform KuaiShou. He was held in an undisclosed location for an extended period of time before being sentenced on unknown charges. During his detention, Paldenn was deprived of fundamental human rights, such as the right to proper legal procedures, including fair trial rights and the legal defence of choice. The absence of transparency in the judicial process has prompted concerns about the impartiality and validity of the judgement. [3]

In March 2023, information about Tibetan writer and interpreter Zangkar Jamyang emerged more than two years after his arbitrary detention. He was sentenced to four years in prison. The details of his sentencing remain unknown, although it is presumed that he was likely sentenced for "inciting separatism". A Kyungchu (Ch: Hongyuan) County resident in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, he is being held in Mianyang prison near Chengdu city. He had been arbitrarily detained on the night of 4 June 2020, with his status and whereabouts remaining unknown for an extended period.

In October 2023, Semkyi Dolma, a Tibetan woman from Damshung County was suddenly detained. In December, her family was notified that she had been sentenced to one and a half years in prison on charges of contacting foreign organisations and individuals. Dolma was born in Chumarleb (Ch: Qumalai) County in Yushu Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, TAR, China, she too was denied fair trial rights and her family was denied any opportunity to help her access legal representation. [4]

On 29 October 2023, Kunchok Dakpa, a Tibetan monk from Tashi Monastery in Thewo (Ch: Diebu) County, Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, TAR, China was detained. His whereabouts, conditions, and reasons for detention remain unknown. [5]

In June 2024, Tsering Tso, a Tibetan tour guide by profession, was detained for the fourth time in five years by the Chinese authorities for exposing Chinese authorities racial discrimination practices against two Tibetan monks on their way to pilgrimage in Drachen (Ch: Bachen) County, Nagchu (Ch: Naqu) Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), China. On the evening of 10 June, at approximately 5pm local time, while escorting a group of monks on a pilgrimage tour to Lhasa and Tsari, local police in Gomri Township interrupted their journey and detained them for 10 hours. Tso later shared the whole incident on her social media exposing Drachen County police discriminatory practices and illegal detention of the two monks. Subsequently, upon her return to her hometown, she was arbitrarily detained on charges of ‘endangering social stability’ and was later released on 8 July, after ten days in administrative detention. [6]

Administrative detention is one of the most common means used by the Chinese law enforcement agencies to silence activists and human rights defenders. It allows discretionary powers to the police and other law enforcement agencies, such as state security, to hold people without charge or trial under administrative regulations, leading to instances of torture and ill-treatment. Tibetans critical of official policies and government leaders are targeted and punished with administrative detention, typically lasting 15 days.

Recommendations

- Asian Dignity Initiative calls on the UN High Commissioner and UN human rights mechanisms to assist China in fulfilling its obligations under international human rights law.
- Asian Dignity Initiative calls on the UN member states of the Human Rights Council to support China in the implementation of all human rights, including freedom from arbitrary detention and ill-treatment of Tibetans inside Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), China.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

2. “Tibetan political prisoner and monk dies in Chinese custody”, 6 February 2023, Radio Free Asia, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/tibetmonkgeshe-02062023165207.html>
3. “Tibetan singer Palden sentenced to three years in prison as china intensifies constraints on freedom of expression”, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 4 December 2023, <https://tchrd.org/tibetan-singer-palden-sentenced-to-three-years-in-prison-as-china-intensifies-constraints-on-freedom-of-expression/>
4. “Tibetan woman imprisoned on charges of alleged charges of sharing state secrets”, Phayul, 8 December 2023, <https://www.phayul.com/2023/12/08/49483/>
5. “Buddhist Monk in Tibet confirmed as detained by Chinese authorities”, Radio Free Asia, 8 November 2023, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/monk-arrested-11082023135941.html>
6. “China must end its persecution of Tibetan human rights defender Tsering Tso”, Tibetan Centre for human Rights and Democracy, 5 August 2024 <https://tchrd.org/china-must-end-its-persecution-of-tibetan-human-rights-defender-tsering-tso/>