

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Human Rights Council

Fifty-fifth Regular Session

March 6, 2024

**Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the
Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association**

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

Mr. President,

We thank the Special rapporteur for his report A/HRC/55/60.

We would like to draw the Council's attention to the peaceful protest of several hundreds of Tibetans against a dam construction project in the eastern Tibetan area of Dege. The dam will destroy the homes of approx. 2,000 Tibetans and six monasteries which are home to invaluable Tibetan cultural heritage. After protests erupted on February 14, Chinese authorities detained more than 1,000 Tibetans. According to reports documented in videos and photographs, authorities used force to end these peaceful protests.

We are deeply concerned about the whereabouts and the fate of the detained, especially as torture and ill-treatment of Tibetans is widespread. We consider the more than 1,000 Tibetans as arbitrarily detained because they peacefully voiced their protest of Chinese authorities' measures that threaten to upend their lives, to destroy their homes, and obliterate their cultural heritage. Tibetans have no means to challenge such decisions, with principles of free, prior, and informed consent respected, as no independent judiciary in the PRC exists.

We call on the Human Rights Council, member states and the Special Rapporteur to demand, while reports have emerged that some Tibetans have been released, that the Chinese government release all peaceful protesters, to refrain from using torture and ill-treatment, and to truly respect the rights and aspirations of the Tibetan people.

Thank you.