

Human Rights Council, 51st Session

27th September 2022

GD Item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Oral statement delivered by the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Madam vice-president,

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation expresses serious concerns regarding the situation of violation of cultural rights with reference to the intensification of forced cultural assimilation of Tibetans inside Tibet by the Chinese government.

In recent years, repressive legal and policy measures¹ were introduced to impose Chinese medium education starting from the preschool level. Non-governmental initiatives offering lessons in Tibetan language and culture have been suppressed².

Sinicization policies have also resulted in the systematic persecution of Tibetan intellectuals, educators, and cultural leaders³; some of those have been victims of incommunicado detention and sentenced in secret without access to due legal process⁴.

Throughout pandemic lockdowns, the human rights situation in Tibet continues to deteriorate⁵. Unprecedented controls on online communication is resulting in Tibet as an informational black hole.

Restrictions on the right to freedom of thought, religion and expression continue to escalate⁶. We have registered cases of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance of Tibetans for merely engaging in peaceful protests.

We call on this Council and the High Commissioner to address the human rights situation of Tibetans and to work together with China to ensure the protection of their cultural rights: their right to determine their own educational and cultural affairs as provided in the Chinese Constitution as well as the Regional National Autonomy Law and to immediately halt the closure of Tibetan language schools and imposition of Chinese medium education.

We thank you.

¹ "China's Bilingual Education policy in Tibet", Human Rights Watch, 4 March 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/03/04/chinas-bilingual-education-policy-tibet/tibetan-medium-schooling-under-threat>

² "Sucked our marrow: Tibetan language and education rights under Xi Jinping", Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 11 May 2022, https://tchrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Tibetan-Language-and-Education-Rights-Under-Xi-Jinping_TCHRD-Thematic-Report.pdf

³ "China: Imprisoned Tibetan monk's health in peril", Human Rights Watch, 9 February 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/02/09/china-imprisoned-tibetan-monks-health-peril>

⁴ "China must end cultural assimilation campaign and crackdown on Tibetan intellectuals and cultural leaders", Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 27 December 2022, <https://tchrd.org/china-must-end-cultural-assimilation-campaign-and-crackdown-on-tibetan-intellectuals-and-cultural-leaders/>

⁵ "China's zero covid policy must be compatible with human rights", Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 18 September 2022, <https://tchrd.org/chinas-zero-covid-policy-must-be-compatible-with-human-rights/>

⁶ "China heightens restrictions after demolishing giant buddha statue and Buddhist school", Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 30 December 2022, <https://tchrd.org/china-heightens-restrictions-after-demolishing-giant-buddha-statue-and-buddhist-school/>