

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Human Rights Council

Fifty-Seventh Regular Session

September 24, 2024

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

*Statement delivered by Vincent Metten on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
Check against delivery*

Mr. President,

Chinese Communist Party forcible assimilation policies continue to be implemented at a fast speed in Tibet. They are having dramatic impacts on the fundamental rights of Tibetans as well as on their culture and identity. Here are two recent illustrations:

First, in late February 2024, Chinese police beat and arbitrarily detained hundreds of residents of Dege County in eastern Tibet who had been peacefully protesting the construction of a large hydropower dam on the Drichu River. We strongly welcome the recent communication by 13 independent UN Human Rights Special Procedures who expressed “deep concern” regarding the Chinese government plans to build the dam, and would welcome if the continued concern expressed by Special Procedures would be reflected by the UN High Commissioner.

Secondly, on July 12, 2024, the Chinese government closed the Jigme Gyaltzen Nationalities Vocational School in Golog which was founded three decades ago and had a successful academic record and a strong focus on Tibetan language and culture. This closure aligns with a broader pattern of the Chinese government shutting down Tibetan educational institutions and relocating students to state-run schools as part of ongoing efforts to exert control over Tibetan education and culture.

Mr. President, we urge the Council's members to immediately request meaningful and unfettered access to Tibet for Special Procedures Mandate holders to assess the human rights situation on the ground, including to Dege County, detention facilities and affected monasteries and to call China to end the forced closures of privately run Tibetan schools and to end the boarding school system in Tibet.

Thank you.