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**Human rights situation in Palestine and other
occupied Arab territories**

Written statement* submitted by Society for Threatened Peoples, 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.

[23 August 2023]

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

Human Rights in the Tibet Autonomous Region and adjacent areas where Tibetans live

Tibetans subjected to Arbitrary Detention and Enforced Disappearance by China in Violation of Basic Human Rights

Society for Threatened Peoples (STP) would like to draw egregious human rights violations faced by Tibetans especially in terms of being subjected to arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance by the Chinese government in the Tibet Autonomous Region and adjacent areas where Tibetans live.

Arbitrary Detention and incarceration:

The Chinese government has routinely detained, tortured and imprisoned Tibetans who spoke out against the Communist regime and its oppressive policies in Tibet. Tibetan writers, intellectuals, environmentalists, community leaders, entrepreneurs, philanthropists and artists have become a constant target of the Chinese authorities for their expression of views critical of the Chinese government.

In 2022, as many as 94 Tibetans were known to have been unfairly detained and arrested by the Chinese authorities. Among them, Chinese courts sentenced 14 Tibetans to prison terms ranging from two to fourteen years on trumped-up charges of “inciting separatism”, “endangering state security”, and “leaking state secrets.”

Gonpo Kyi, sister of Tibetan political prisoner Dorjee Tashi, has been arbitrarily detained multiple times and subjected to inhuman treatment by the Chinese authorities for raising her voice and demanding justice for her brother, who is serving life imprisonment under trumped-up charges. Instead of heeding the voices of Gonpo Kyi, the Chinese authorities in Lhasa forcibly removed her from outside of People’s court and detained her for a night at Lhasa Beijing Middle Road Police Station. While in detention center, she was subjected to torture and sustained an injury to her right arm. During her latest sit-in protest in front of Tibet Autonomous Regions Higher People’s Court, the Chinese police surrounded Gonpo Kyi with a large black police banner to hide her, the tactic ensuring her sit-in protest, placards and voices are securely hidden from public view.

Extremely concerning reports of deaths due to torture continues to emerge from Tibet. At least five Tibetan political prisoners are reported to have died as a result of torture in 2022. In 2021, two Tibetans, Tenzin Nyima, 19 and Kunchok Jinpa, 51, died after being severely beaten and tortured by the Chinese authorities during their detention. In some cases, Chinese authorities released Tibetan prisoners prematurely in near-death conditions to prevent deaths in prison. The true number of such cases is unknown due to extreme information controls in Tibet.

Since 2009, with limited space to express grievances, Tibetans are compelled to take extreme forms of protest through self-immolation. There are 157 known cases of self-immolation protests in Tibet. They have called for freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness to the Dalai Lama.

Enforced Disappearance and the Case of Panchen Lama: One of the Oldest Unresolved Cases of Enforced Disappearance in the World

This year marked the 28th year of enforced disappearance of 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his entire family. For 28 years on, there is no verifiable information about his whereabouts and well being. The continued enforced disappearance of the Panchen Lama is of serious concern.

Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was born on 25 April 1989 to Kunchok Phuntsog (father) and Dechen Chodon (mother) in Lhari district of Nagchu province in Tibet Autonomous

Region. When he was just six-year-old, His Holiness the Dalai Lama recognized him as the 11th Panchen Lama on 14 May 1995. But within three days, on 17 May 1995, the Chinese authorities kidnapped Panchen Lama along with his entire family. Chadrel Rinpoche, the head of the search committee for identification of 11th Panchen Lama, was sentenced to six years imprisonment in 1997.

China has refused to divulge any verifiable information about their whereabouts. Instead, a son of communist party members was installed by China as their choice of Panchen Lama.

The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance underscored the case of Panchen Lama as that of an “unresolved” disappeared case. Similarly, a number of UN human rights protection mechanisms including the UN Committee against Torture, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, have all called for his whereabouts to be revealed, to no avail.

The case of Panchen Lama reflects a wider range of situations in Tibet under the Chinese occupation, particularly, China’s systematic suppression of freedom of religion and belief and interference to gain control over the centuries old Tibetan Buddhist system of reincarnation.

28 years of enforced disappearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family members is a continuous crime not just against him, his family and the Tibetan people but also against every individual who believes in the sanctity of human rights. This is a crime against humanity and China must be held accountable for this heinous act.

In view of above, Society for Threatened Peoples urges the UNHRC:

- To divulge the whereabouts of Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, his family members and Chadrel Rinpoche and provide unfettered access to independent experts and media to meet them and assess their situation;
- To release all Tibetans arbitrarily detained and stop the system of harassment against Tibetans through arbitrary detention;
- To assess the situation of Tibetans being subjected to arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance;
- To press China to give unfettered access and allow independent experts to Tibet Autonomous Region and Areas where Tibetans live to assess the ground situation;
- Call China to enter into a meaningful dialogue with representatives of the Tibetan people to address the underlying grievances of Tibetan people.

Society for Threatened Peoples, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.