

17 March 2008

H. E. Ambassador Doru-Romulus Costea
President of the United Nations Human Rights Council
Palais des Nations
1211 GENEVA 10

cc. Members of the Human Rights Council

Sub: Appeal for a Special Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council on the Human Rights Situation in the People's Republic of China

Your Excellency,

The undersigned Non-Governmental Organisations in the Asian region call upon the UN Human Rights Council to hold a Special Session on the current human rights situation in the People's Republic of China.

We welcome that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on Friday expressed her concern on the Tibetan people's situation and urged "the Government of China to allow demonstrators to exercise their right to freedom of expression and assembly, to refrain from any excessive use of force while maintaining order, and to ensure those arrested are not ill-treated and are accorded due process in line with international standards."

Following her recommendations, we would like to appeal to Council members to address the ongoing gross human rights violations against Tibetans with regards to their right to life, freedom of expression and assembly, among others. We also urge the members to seriously look into the cases of violent crackdown on a series of peaceful demonstrations in the "Tibet Autonomous Region" and Tibetan areas of Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan provinces in China.

In this respect, we urge the High Commissioner to send a fact-finding mission equipped with full access to all the Tibetan areas where there had been extrajudicial or summary killings, arbitrary detention, and enforced disappearances since 10 March, when the current wave of demonstrations began.

Judging from the information available to us regarding the scale of the ongoing human rights violations against the Tibetan people, including the reported deaths of 80 Tibetans, it is imperative that the Human Rights Council as the principal human rights organ of the United Nations take urgent measures by convening a special session to address the current situation in China. We are of the opinion that the current situation in Tibetan areas is very similar to Burma, where peaceful demonstrators were also attacked by the authorities, and on which this Council took action in September 2007.

We urge the Council to swiftly call upon the Chinese authorities to receive a joint mission of Special Procedures mandate-holders on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution and other relevant mandates such as the Special Rapporteur on Torture, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression and the Special Representative of Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders.

We remain at your disposal for any further information or consultation on this urgent matter.

Thank you very much for your attention to this appeal.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR)
Asian Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Network (AITPN)
International NGO Forum for Indonesian Development (INFID)
Pax Romana ICMICA/MIIC - Asia Pacific
Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP)
Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO)

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