

Oral statement to the 49th session of the UN Human Rights Council

Item 2: General Debate

Speaker: Raphael Viana David

Madam High Commissioner,

183 days. This is how long Chinese human rights defenders Ding Jiayi¹ and Chang Weiping² were disappeared and subject to torture under China's system of '[Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location](#)' (RSDL)³. Throughout this period their families had no idea of their whereabouts, or even if they were alive.

Special Procedures experts have [determined](#) that RSDL is 'a form of enforced disappearance' and 'is not compatible with international human rights law', urging its immediate repeal. Civil society groups estimate [at least 57,000 individuals](#), have been held under RSDL since 2013. We call on your Office to strengthen its monitoring of enforced disappearance in China, including under RSDL.

Madam High Commissioner,

The Chinese authorities systematically invoke 'national security' to justify the protracted detention of defenders under Chinese law without access to a lawyer, far-reaching restrictions to free speech, and enforced disappearance under RSDL. One such defender is feminist journalist Huang Xueqin, who was disappeared for exposing sexual harassment in the workplace. Today, International Women's Day, marks the 181st day of her incommunicado detention, accused of 'inciting subversion of State power.

Special Procedures have raised [concerns about China's abuse of national security](#), including in the Tibetan and Uyghur regions, and in Hong Kong, in at least 23 letters to the government since 2018. In contrast, we have been concerned by you and your Office's relative silence.

Together with over 200 NGOs, we urge you to release your Office's report on grave violations in the Uyghur region, and to brief the Council on its contents, as a matter of urgency.

Accountability can wait no longer.

Thank you,

¹ In Chinese: 丁家喜

² In Chinese: 常玮平

³ In Chinese: 指定居所监视居住