

Oral statement to the 50th session of the Human Rights Council

Item 2: Interactive Dialogue with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Speaker: Raphael Viana David

Madame High Commissioner,

In June 2020, 50 UN Special Procedures experts urged this Council to establish an independent mechanism to monitor the human rights situation in China. Since you took office, they have issued over 80 communications to the government.

Only a few days ago, 42 mandate holders once more called for a credible international investigation. They regretted not seeing *any* signs of political will from China to address their concerns. They concluded with the vital message that: ‘Upholding the same standards and their equal application to all States big and small is important to maintaining the integrity, credibility and moral authority’ of the UN.

We share their assessment and urgency.

In contrast with your approach to other situations where there is overwhelming evidence of grave and systematic violations, you have not spoken with moral authority on human rights in China. This has undermined the confidence of Chinese, Tibetan, Uyghur and Hong Kong victims, and all those who defend their rights, in your Office’s commitment to combat impunity for serious violations.

Madame High Commissioner,

We agree that we should advance dialogue, but this dialogue must be principled, frank and informed. This is precisely why we so urgently need a substantial and impartial UN assessment on human rights in China. To pave the way for an informed discussion by this Council, based on objective human rights concerns, with the voice of victims at its heart, we urge you to promptly publish your report on the Uyghur region and brief the Council on your findings. It should include strong recommendations to the Chinese government and a call to action to the international community.

Finally, we note the imminent conclusion of your mandate and urge the Secretary General to commit to a process for the appointment of the next High Commissioner that is open, transparent, merit-based and involves meaningful consultation with independent civil society organisations and human rights defenders

It is time to prove that the UN system will live up to what millions of human rights defenders and victims expect of it.

Thank you.