

## United Nations Rights Chief Should Address Beijing's Deepening Repression

*Silence on Atrocity Crimes Allegations Enables Impunity, Say 26 Rights Groups*

(Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders—February 24, 2026) Twenty-six civil society organizations are calling on United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk to use his February 27 address to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) to detail his office's efforts to investigate alleged Chinese government crimes against humanity. The groups also urged Türk to explicitly call on the Chinese government to end and redress ongoing and systematic human rights violations, including those documented since the end of the previous HRC session.

The HRC's 61st [session](#) runs from February 23-March 31, 2026.

The groups stressed that multiple UN bodies, including Türk's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), have [alleged](#) that the scale of human rights violations perpetrated by the Chinese government may constitute [crimes against humanity](#) or [genocide](#). The organizations underscored that the HRC exists to hold perpetrators of these violations accountable, and that it and OHCHR are overdue to take concrete action.

Since the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' [landmark 2022 report](#), High Commissioner Türk has shared little information publicly as to progress redressing the [crimes](#) documented by his Office; those crimes are ongoing. Nor has he detailed any specific steps the government has taken to implement the recommendations from his Office in response to his engagement.

Since the end of the previous HRC session on October 8, 2025, Chinese authorities have continued to arbitrarily detain [religious leaders](#) and [journalists](#); [prosecute](#) activists for peacefully exercising their rights, and defenders for [free expression](#); and [forcibly disappear](#) human rights defenders and prevent them from seeking medical care. Authorities continue to use the vague charge of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” to silence critics, despite Türk's [call](#) to the Chinese government to repeal the provision.

The civil society organizations appreciate the Office's February 9, 2026 [condemnation](#) of Hong Kong authorities' 20-year sentence imposed on publisher Jimmy Lai and the Office's call for Lai's release. In a January 19, 2026 statement marking its annual review of [executions](#) globally, Türk expressed concern that the Chinese government's “use of the death penalty remains shrouded in secrecy.” And on December 9, 2025, Türk called on Hong Kong officials to [refrain](#) from using “the territory's draconian security laws” to silence public activism in the wake of the Tai Po fire, and to repeal those laws or bring them into conformity with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which remains in force in Hong Kong.

Despite these interventions, on February 11, 2026 a Hong Kong court [convicted](#) the father of Anna Kwok, an exiled pro-democracy activist, under Article 23 of the Basic Law in a clear act of [collective punishment](#) and [transnational repression](#).

Including new information on his efforts to investigate Beijing's alleged crimes against humanity would be consistent with High Commissioner Türk's own January 30, 2026 remarks in support of a [new treaty](#) on precisely these crimes. While encouraging states to "be ambitious" in negotiating and adopting a treaty on crimes against humanity, Türk [described](#) the debates as "a once in a generation opportunity to advance prevention and accountability for crimes against humanity."

"High Commissioner Türk has his own opportunity to be ambitious and make clear to Beijing its atrocity crimes will be investigated," said Sophie Richardson, Co-Executive Director of Chinese Human Rights Defenders. "As important, he has an opportunity to show the generations of victims and survivors of those and other crimes that they have not been forgotten."

The civil society organizations joining this statement include the Alliance for Citizens Rights, Article 19, Campaign for Uyghurs, China Aid, Chinese Human Rights Defenders, the Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation, Free Tibet, Fortify Rights, Humanitarian China, the Human Rights Foundation, Human Rights in China, the International Federation for Human Rights, the International Service for Human Rights, International Tibet Network, International Campaign for Tibet, No Business With Genocide, Reporters Without Borders, The Rights Practice, Tibet Action Institute, United Uyghur Youth, Uyghur American Association, Uyghurs at UN Action Initiative, the Uyghur Human Rights Project, the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, Wild Pigeon Collective, and the World Uyghur Congress.

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