



ཡོ་རོབ་བོད་རིགས་གཞོན་ནུའི་མ་གུན་ཚོགས་པ།  
Verein Tibeter Jugend in Europa  
Tibetan Youth Association in Europe



March 28, 2024

## Denouncing Dechen Shak's Deception

Joint statement of Swiss Tibetan Friendship Association, Tibetan Community in Switzerland & Liechtenstein, Tibetan Women's Association in Switzerland, and Tibetan Youth Association on speech delivered by Ms. Dechen Shak at a [side event](#) held by the [China Society for Human Rights Studies](#) (CSHRS) during the UN Human Rights Council 55th session on March 18, 2024

We, the undersigned organizations, express our deep concern on and rejection of the remarks made by the Tibetan singer, Ms. Dechen Shak, at this side event. The event was organized by the China Society for Human Rights Studies, which calls itself a “non-governmental organization”. However, a closer look at the CSHRS reveals that it is “promoting and practicing a contemporary Chinese perspective on Human Rights”, meaning that in fact it is the mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party and government of the People's Republic China (PRC), hence, by no means independent or “non-governmental”.

Ms. Dechen Shak made highly problematic remarks on the system of boarding schools for Tibetan children, which we reject. She thanked the government of the PRC several times in emotional words about “preserving Tibetan language and culture” with this system. On the contrary, she claimed that Tibetan language and culture are disappearing in exile. In this respect, we remind her of the opposite: there are 24 schools in Switzerland with over 600 students.

These remarks are fundamentally wrong and are ignoring the evidence obtained in a [report](#) by the Tibet Action Institute. In summary, the report concludes: “*The Chinese government has established a vast network of colonial boarding schools in Tibet where students live separated from their families and are subjected to highly politicized education, primarily in Chinese. Touted by the Chinese government as a means of providing education to a sparse and far-flung population, the schools are the cornerstone of an assimilationist agenda advanced by Chinese President Xi Jinping himself, intended to preempt threats to Chinese Communist Party control by eliminating ethnic differences. The impact of the colonial boarding school experience on Tibetan children and their families – including psychological and emotional trauma – and the implications for whole generations of Tibetans and the long-term survival of Tibetan identity are grave.*” Parents affected by this system involving approximately 1 million children are put under pressure to separate from their children and threatened with punishment or social disadvantages should they refuse sending their children to these schools.

This system of colonial boarding schools has been condemned by various [international bodies](#), parliaments, and individuals. It is obvious that the government of the PRC has started a campaign attempting to distort the evidence and impact of this report. We deeply regret that it is now using Tibetan voices such as that of Ms. Dechen Shak in this respect to polish its image.

Ms. Dechen Shak claims that she is “building bridges”. The opposite is the case. Bridges are built by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Central Tibetan Administration, and the various Tibetan communities worldwide. Through their efforts Tibetan culture and religion are preserved in exile.

Therefore, we strongly condemn the remarks made by Dechen Shak.

For the organizations:

Organization	Signature
Swiss Tibetan Friendship Association Dr. Uwe Meya (Member of Board)	
Tibetan Community in Switzerland & Liechtenstein Mr. Ngedun Gyatso Drongpatsang (President)	
Tibetan Women's Association in Switzerland Mrs Tsering Youdon Marsen (President)	
Tibetan Youth Association in Europe Ms Tsering Gonpa, Ms Kalsang Choyulpa (Co-President)	