

China: Statement by the Spokesperson on the release of human rights defender Tashi Wangchuk

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Human rights defender Tashi Wangchuk has been released from prison in China, after serving a five-year prison sentence linked to his peaceful advocacy for Tibetan language rights.

The right to use and develop minority languages is guaranteed under the Chinese Constitution and under international human rights law. Protecting native languages is critical to maintaining culture and identity. Citizens of Tibetan descent in China face restrictions on freedom of religion or belief, and freedom of education in a minority language. There are also numerous related cases of detention, disappearances and deaths in detention.

The European Union calls upon the Chinese authorities to ensure that Mr Wangchuk's release is unconditional and that he is able to enjoy his fundamental freedoms, including freedom of movement and residence. The EU also urges the authorities to conduct a thorough investigation into allegations of mistreatment, torture and abuses on Mr Wangchuk while in detention.

The EU calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all those currently imprisoned in connection with the exercise of their rights and fundamental freedoms. Those in detention have a right to a fair trial and due process, and to decent treatment, free from torture and ill treatment while in prison. The European Union will continue to engage with China on human rights issues.

CONTACT DETAILS

NABILA MASSRALI

Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

✉ nabila.massrali@ec.europa.eu