



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-first session

12 September–7 October 2022

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by Victorious Youths Movement, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 August 2022]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## **Human right and Draconian Lockdowns in China**

Recently, a video of Chinese shoppers attempting to escape an IKEA mall went viral despite the best efforts of the Chinese establishment, and the rapid removal of videos from social media platforms. The scramble was prompted by a decision to lock down the store as some customers had reportedly tested positive for COVID-19. Notable in the video was the refusal of the shoppers to comply with police, with the public forcing their way out and escaping.

The development throws into light the increasing gulf in the treatment of and approach to COVID-19 between China and the rest of the world. Most nations have opted to return to normal life, secure in the knowledge that the availability of vaccines coupled with stronger immune systems and the lower virulence of the emergent Coronavirus strains have dramatically altered the risk-reward calculus. China remains wedded to its “Zero-COVID” policy – unable to alter its direction for fear of undermining President Xi Jinping who has thrown his full weight behind COVID Zero, and imposed some of the most repressive lockdowns as a means to achieving this goal.

Public perception of the risk of COVID has rapidly shifted owing to the various mitigating factors as well as the better courses of treatment; and most of the world is ready to move on with life and wary of the human cost involved. The number of human rights violated in Chinese crackdowns is frankly staggering. The right to freedom of expression, the right to freedom of movement – core human rights are utterly ignored to an extent that has shocked and angered a public which is entirely amenable to even harsh restrictions, provided they are in the public interest.

The initial COVID-19 lockdowns in China were widely accepted by the public, even when their implementation was often brutal. The need for such policy measures was evident and this was seen in their reception. In 2022 however, public mood has turned drastically against these measures as the public recognizes the futility of eradicating the disease. It is clear by now this policy is doomed to a cycle of lockdowns and re-opening. The difference in public tolerance occurs as the public perceives that the present crackdowns are motivated not by the desire to save lives but to utterly eradicate the virus at any cost; the only possible method of vindicating the decisions not to follow the rest of the world in liberalizing restrictions.

China’s present approach is not maintainable in the long run and rapidly losing the support of its populace. The difficulty in moving towards a strategy of mitigation lies not in logistics, but in the narrative challenge of ending restrictions while not acknowledging the folly of pushing them past the point where they could be justified. our organization urges this Council to call upon China to ensure due respect for internationally accepted human rights norms, regardless of what Covid-19 containment policies it may choose to implem

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Mouvement pour la Solidarité Mondiale SOS Droits Humains, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.