



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

UN experts urge China to prevent discrimination against Tibetans, Uyghurs and other ethnic groups

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Geneva - United Nations experts on racial discrimination today urged the Chinese government to review policies and laws that discriminate against Tibetans, Uyghurs and Mongols.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination made this recommendation in [its concluding observations](#) from its review of China at a hearing last month in Geneva. The committee issued a number of recommendations while highlighting torture and ill-treatment against ethnic groups, the use of anti-terror and anti-separatism laws to stifle dissent and the diminishing space for civil society in China. The committee also issued detailed recommendations with regard to the human rights of Mongols, Tibetans and Uyghurs.

The committee said that it is “concerned by reports that Tibetans are subjected to significant restrictions on movement within and beyond Tibet Autonomous Region, and that the issuance of passports for foreign travel is almost entirely banned in the region. It is also concerned by reports that Tibetan language teaching in schools in the Tibet Autonomous Region has not been placed on equal footing in law, policy and practice with Chinese, and that it has been significantly restricted; that Tibetan language advocacy has been punished; and that Tibetans do not have access to Tibetan language translations during court proceedings, which are held in Mandarin.”

It recommended that the Chinese government “preserve the Tibetan language” by “encouraging and promoting its use in the fields of education, the judicial system and the media.”

The committee also expressed general concern regarding resettlement policies that affect Tibetans.

According to the committee, China should “strengthen measures to prevent acts of torture and ill-treatment committed against members of ethnic minorities,” the committee said, apparently dismissing claims by the Chinese government that reports of those acts being committed were “false.” The committee expressed its concern “that the broad definition of terrorism and vague references to extremism and unclear definition of separatism in Chinese legislation, could have the potential to criminalize peaceful civic and religious expression and facilitate criminal profiling of ethnic and ethno-religious minorities, including Muslim Uyghurs and Buddhist Tibetans and Mongolians.”

Matteo Mecacci, President of the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), said ICT welcomes the recommendations by the experts. ICT submitted a [shadow report](#) to the committee and responded to questions by the experts during an [interactive dialogue](#).

In its shadow report, ICT provided additional and complementary information about the paternalistic attitudes of Chinese toward Tibetans and about the discriminatory policies in place in Tibet, such as the relocation and forced resettlements of Tibetan nomads and herders, the oppressive environment against Tibetan Buddhism and the repression of Tibetans after incidents of self-immolations.

During the review session, the Chinese delegation flatly denied its systematic discrimination against Tibetans and Uyghurs. The Chinese officials' lies during the hearing prompted one committee member to ask sarcastically whether the delegation "has not come here all the way from China to tell us everything is okay."

After the committee released its recommendations, Mecacci said, "The UN experts have sent a clear message to China to review and stop its discriminatory policies in Tibet and elsewhere. The international community must call on Beijing to respect basic standards of international human rights.

"Tibetans are persecuted whenever they try to freely practice their religion and culture, or simply attempt to protect their language. They are subjected to arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment, while the Chinese authorities have rolled out an oppressive surveillance state, sending Communist Party cadres to villages to indoctrinate Tibetans. Chinese leaders routinely discriminate against Tibetans and label them as 'backward,' 'separatist,' 'splittist' or even terrorists."

In its [oral statement](#) to the Committee, ICT said: "Chinese authorities must end their narrative on Tibetans' 'backwardness' and start promoting a view of Tibetan culture that neither reduces Tibetans to folklore, nor falsely promotes notions of the superiority of Chinese culture.

"Tibetans should be allowed to steward their own affairs from the bottom up. Laws and policies that criminalize Tibetan life, control and surveil religious practitioners and force Tibetan nomads and herders off of their ancestral lands must end. Among them are religious regulations and laws that are said to combat terrorism but, in reality, merely oppress ordinary Tibetans."

You can read [CERD'S full concluding observations here](#).