



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Remarks by ICT President Matteo Mecacci at Tiananmen Square Massacre rally hosted by the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation

June 4, 2019

Thank you, all.

It was 30 years ago when brave and patriotic Chinese students rose to challenge a dictatorship, and then they were crushed.

It was 60 years ago that the Tibetan people in Lhasa rose to protect His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and then, after the Dalai Lama was forced to flee into exile, they were crushed.

It is today that over 1 million Uyghurs are kept in re-education camps by Beijing through extreme polices of social control that have been tested in Tibet before and will now be applied in other parts of China and beyond.

All this repression does not represent the strength of the Chinese government, it represents its weakness, because it means they have not yet won the trust of the people they govern.

Our societies, our governments, have allowed the Chinese government to do that and to get away with that.

We have lived under a great illusion: that capitalism, the free market, would bring democracy to China.

While economic progress is important to any society, including China, it cannot come at the expense of freedom. We have seen this in the past, and it has led only to tragedies. And by enabling the growth of an authoritarian China, we are now faced with the consequences of the expansion and influence of this model well beyond its borders.

By providing political legitimacy to closed societies, we do not encourage them to reform. To the contrary, we encourage them not to do so.

Reciprocity means that as China grows on the world stage, it has become mandatory that it aligns with international standards on economic and trade issues. But it is as important that it opens up to the world in other areas: freedom of movement, freedom of information and academic freedoms are essential rights whose respect must be demanded.

The US Congress has shown some great leadership by passing important legislation to hold China and other authoritarian governments accountable, from the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Act to the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act. There is other important pending legislation that must be passed, including the Uyghur Human Rights Act.

But the message from here is also to the Administration, to the State Department and to the White House: implement the legislation now! It is already late for those who have already died and sacrificed; let's make sure we stop the repression before it is too late.