



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### Journalists assoc. calls for media access to Tibet, adding to mounting international pressure on China

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**Foreign Correspondents' Club of China** @fcc... · Mar 29, 2019

Replying to @fccchina

Late last year, China sentenced Tibetan language activist Tashi Wangchuk to five years in prison based largely on comments he made in a New York Times video documentary. The case sent a chilling message that harms efforts to report on Tibetan issues even outside Tibet.

**Foreign Correspondents' Club of China** @fccchina

With the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics approaching, the FCCC calls on China to eliminate restrictions of foreign correspondents traveling to Tibet by 2021, approve all reporting-trip applications in the meantime, and cease intimidation of Tibetan sources or would-be sources.

4 12:48 AM - Mar 29, 2019

[See Foreign Correspondents' Club of China's other Tweets](#)

April 2, 2019

- The Foreign Correspondents' Club of China has released a position paper calling on China to give reporters unfettered access to the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas.
- The paper builds on the success of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, which was signed into law in December and targets China's unfair closure of Tibet to the outside world.
- The paper shows that China's isolation of Tibet is becoming untenable, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) said.

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of China is the latest stakeholder to insist the Chinese government end restrictions on travel to Tibet and open up the oppressed region to outside observers.

Last week, the club published a [position paper](#) that says "obstacles to reporting pose a serious impediment to obtaining accurate information about the lives of ethnic Tibetans in China." The paper adds that, "Unlike other provinces and regions in the country, journalists who seek to report in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) are required to first obtain permission from the government. This permission is rarely granted."

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The paper calls for “unfettered access to the Tibet Autonomous Region and all Tibetan-inhabited regions” of China.

In pursuit of that goal, the paper says Chinese authorities should approve all applications for individual reporting trips to Tibet by the end of 2019 and eliminate the requirement of pre-approval for reporting trips to the TAR in time for the 2022 Olympics in China.

The paper also calls on the Chinese government to stop intimidating reporters’ sources and allow journalists to speak with anyone who agrees to an interview.

Foreign governments should also protest China’s intimidation of journalists who interview the Dalai Lama and request data from the Chinese government on journalists’ applications to report on Tibet, the paper says.

The paper adds that foreign governments should push for the release of Tashi Wangchuk, a Tibetan language rights advocate who was [sentenced to five years in jail](#) in 2018 after he appeared in a New York Times video.

## Background

China’s isolation of Tibet—a historically independent country that China has [brutally occupied for 60 years](#)—has received renewed attention since the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA) was [signed into law in the US in December 2018](#).

The legislation takes aim at China’s double standard of preventing American journalists, diplomats and ordinary citizens from traveling to Tibet even though Chinese citizens travel unhindered throughout the US and Chinese state media operate freely in Washington, DC and other cities.

Under RATA, the State Department is required to deny US visas to the Chinese officials involved in keeping Americans out of Tibet.

Recently, more than 30 parliamentarians across Europe published an [op-ed calling for similar legislation in their countries](#).

Last month, as part of RATA, the State Department released a first-of-its-kind report on US access to Tibet, which found that China [“systematically” impeded Americans’ travel to the region](#) in 2018.

The position paper from the Foreign Correspondents’ club adds to the mounting pressure on China to end its isolation of Tibet.

The paper notes that there has been a sharp decline in the number of journalists who apply for reporting trips to Tibet, which the club attributes to China’s heavy-handed restrictions.

Only five respondents in the club’s annual survey of working conditions said they applied for reporting trips to the TAR in 2018. None were approved.

The few foreign reporters who do get into Tibet are typically forced to stay on closely-supervised government tours.

One journalist who took part in a 2016 tour said “I’ve felt freer in North Korea” than in Tibet, according to the paper.

## **ICT statement**

“This position paper from the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of China is a clear sign that China’s isolation of Tibet is not only unjust, but is becoming untenable.

“For too long, Beijing has exploited the freedoms provided by democratic societies to spread its propaganda around the world even as China hypocritically prevented foreign media, diplomats and tourists from entering Tibet.

“Now, a variety of stakeholders—including media, politicians, diplomats and thousands of Tibetan-Americans—are demanding reciprocity and fairness in bilateral relations.”—Matteo Mecacci, president of the International Campaign for Tibet and a former Member of Parliament in Italy.