



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### **New China foreign correspondents report shows need for access to Tibet, ICT says**

<http://www.savetibet.org/new-china-foreign-correspondents-report-shows-need-for-access-to-tibet-ict-says/>

January 29, 2019

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of China's 2018 report on media freedoms in that country underscores the need for overseas journalists and citizens to have reciprocal access to Tibet, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) said today.

The report, titled "Under Watch: Reporting in China's Surveillance State," documents the severe restrictions China places on members of the international media who attempt to cover Tibet, a historically independent country that China has occupied and ruled with an iron fist for 70 years.

#### **"Off limits"**

The report—which is based on a survey of more than 100 correspondents in China from 31 countries and regions—notes that Chinese regulations allow reporters to travel anywhere in the country except for the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), an area that is around half the size of historical Tibet. One unnamed reporter from the United Kingdom is quoted in the report as saying, "I was explicitly told reporting on Xinjiang or Tibet was off limits."

The other half of the Tibetan areas are incorporated into Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan and Gansu provinces and are theoretically open to foreigners.

Despite this, the report says that two of the four correspondents in the survey who tried to report on Tibetan areas outside the TAR were told by authorities that their reporting was restricted or prohibited.

Xinjiang, known to Uyghurs as East Turkestan, is the site of notorious internment camps where about 1 million Uyghurs have been jailed because of their ethnicity and religion. Chen Quanguo, the Chinese Communist Party secretary in Xinjiang, [held the same position in the TAR earlier this decade](#).

#### **Followed and detained in Tibet**

The report mentions specific cases of reporters who were harassed inside Tibet.

In February 2018, New York Times reporter Steven Lee Myers and a photographer were detained for nearly 17 hours after trying to cover a New Year ceremony at the Dzongsar monastery, located in the Tibetan area of present-day Sichuan. They were prevented from using their phones and reprimanded by police before being escorted to the closest airport.

The next month, Le Monde bureau Chief Brice Pedroletti was followed repeatedly in the Tibetan area of Ngaba (Chinese: Aba). Local officials offered him “help” and “assistance,” and despite being rejected by Pedroletti, they continued to follow him.

### **Need for reciprocity**

Hanna Sahlberg, president of the Foreign Correspondents’ Club, observed that China’s growing repression of foreign media comes at the same time that Chinese state media are expanding overseas and spreading Beijing’s propaganda around the globe.

That double standard is one of the reasons for [the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act \(RATA\), a new law in the US](#) that calls for access to Tibet for American journalists, diplomats and other citizens and will deny US visas for Chinese officials who block Americans from entering Tibet.

“By documenting China’s Orwellian efforts to restrict international media in Tibet, the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of China has demonstrated why RATA is so vital,” said ICT Vice President Bhuchung K. Tsering. “We look forward to working with the State Department to fully implement this law and to continuing to fight for reporters’ access to Tibet.”

[Download the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of China’s 2018 report.](#)