



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

State Dept. should implement Tibet reciprocity after capping Chinese state media journalists in US: ICT

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The decision by the State Department to cap the number of Chinese citizens allowed to work in the United States for media controlled by the Chinese government addresses the long-standing issue of the lack of reciprocity in US-China relations when it comes to freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

For many years, the Chinese government has taken the opportunity provided by free and democratic countries to expand its state-controlled media operations in those countries with the goal of spreading propaganda and influencing public opinion. At the same time, China has severely restricted foreign journalists' access to China, creating an unsustainable imbalance in bilateral relations.

Restrictions on the work of foreign journalists in China are well-known and widespread, but they are particularly severe for foreign journalists trying to access the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas ruled by China. In particular, the Chinese government requires all foreign citizens to acquire an additional permit to access the TAR, effectively preventing foreign journalists from traveling there to report on the situation of Tibetans.

In its recent annual report, the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China noted that the TAR is the only region of China that journalists need prior permission to enter. According to the club's 2019 survey, out of 10 journalists who tried to report in Tibetan areas last year, nine said they were told by officials that reporting was prohibited or restricted.

At the end of 2018, the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Trump, requiring the State Department to ban from the US all Chinese officials who are directly responsible for blocking access to Tibet for American citizens, including journalists.

The State Department should now fully implement RATA to make sure that American citizens are treated equally and with reciprocity by the Chinese government and to push back against the decades-long isolation of Tibet from the outside world.



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