



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Chinese response to UN experts on Panchen Lama is absurd historical falsehood

<https://savetibet.org/chinese-response-to-un-experts-on-panchen-lama-is-absurd-historical-falsehood>

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In a [response made public recently](#) by the United Nations, the Chinese government has bluntly refuted [concerns](#) by five United Nations human rights experts and expert bodies on its intervention with the appointment of Tibetan Buddhist leaders and the case of the “disappeared” Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima.

In a [“communication” sent in June and made public in August 2020](#), the experts had expressed grave concern at the continued refusal by the Government of China to disclose precisely the whereabouts of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima,” the 11th Panchen Lama, and called for an independent monitor to visit him. The Chinese government’s rules on the appointment of Tibetan Buddhist leaders “may interfere and possibly undermine[s], in a discriminatory way, the religious traditions and practices of the Tibetan Buddhist minority.” Citing concerns about the succession of the 14th Dalai Lama, the experts appealed to the Chinese government “to ensure that Tibetan Buddhists are able to freely practice their religion, traditions and cultures without interference,” as freedom of religion includes the right of Tibetan Buddhists “to determine their clergy and religious leaders in accordance with their own religious traditions and practices.”

While the communication by the UN experts referred to a corpus of human rights principles with regard to the rights of religious communities to appoint their leaders free from government intervention, the Chinese government response, sent in July, merely and inaccurately states that the “religious status and titles” of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama had been established by the “central government” and denounces the concerns of the UN experts as “foreign meddling”. There is no reference or explanation given in response to the legal arguments brought forward by the UN experts.

Quote by Kai Mueller, head of ICT's UN advocacy team and executive director of ICT Germany

“The Chinese government’s response underscores the [criticism](#) of 50 UN independent human rights experts in June 2020 about China always rejecting criticism. This is all the more reason why the international community should support the experts’ call for an impartial and independent UN mechanism to closely monitor, analyse and report on the human rights situation in the PRC.

“Instead of taking the legal concerns of the UN experts seriously, the Chinese government falsely states that the ‘central government’ had established the reincarnation system. The Tibetan Buddhist reincarnation system [dates back to the 13th century](#). Neither was there a “central government”, nor such influence on Tibetan Buddhism through any entity that the CCP may view as its predecessor. To claim the CCP would be guardian of Tibetan Buddhist beliefs is outright absurd.”



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