



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

EU, US officials react to Tashi Wangchuk release

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Officials in both the European Union and the United States have responded to the release of Tibetan political prisoner Tashi Wangchuk by calling on China to respect Tibetans' rights.

According to his lawyer, Tashi ended his prison sentence last week, Jan. 28, 2021, after completing a five-year term for speaking to The New York Times about China's efforts to prevent Tibetans from learning their own language.

Although Tashi has been released, concerns are high that he will not truly be free, as Chinese authorities routinely harass former Tibetan political prisoners and deprive them of their rights.

Tashi's case also highlights the Chinese government's ongoing campaign to eliminate Tibetans' unique religion and culture, including their ancestral language.

Below are statements from EU and US officials on Tashi's release.

European Union

*China: Statement by the Spokesperson on the release of human rights defender Tashi Wangchuk
Brussels, 29/01/2021*

Statements by the Spokesperson

Human rights defender Tashi Wangchuk has been released from prison in China, after serving a five-year prison sentence linked to his peaceful advocacy for Tibetan language rights.

The right to use and develop minority languages is guaranteed under the Chinese Constitution and under international human rights law. Protecting native languages is critical to maintaining culture and identity. Citizens of Tibetan descent in China face restrictions on freedom of religion or belief, and freedom of education in a minority language. There are also numerous related cases of detention, disappearances and deaths in detention.

The European Union calls upon the Chinese authorities to ensure that Mr Wangchuk's release is unconditional and that he is able to enjoy his fundamental freedoms, including freedom of movement and residence. The EU also urges the authorities to conduct a thorough investigation into allegations of mistreatment, torture and abuses on Mr Wangchuk while in detention.

The EU calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all those currently imprisoned in connection with the exercise of their rights and fundamental freedoms. Those in detention have a right to a fair trial and due process, and to decent treatment, free from torture and ill treatment while in prison. The European Union will continue to engage with China on human rights issues.

US State Department

As told to The New York Times:

“We urge Chinese authorities to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms to which the people of China, including Tibetans, are entitled under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

Rep. James McGovern, D-Mass., and Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla.

As told to Radio Free Asia:

“We will be monitoring Tashi Wangchuk’s condition and call on Chinese authorities to ensure that he is fully free from all post-release restrictions”



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