



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### Freedom House: Tibet ties Syria as world's least free

Read online: <https://savetibet.org/foreign-journalists-say-china-blocked-independent-reporting-in-tibet>

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Tibet is now tied with Syria as the least-free country in the world, according to the latest rankings from the influential watchdog group Freedom House.

According to the group's Freedom in the World 2021 report, Tibet has a total score of 1 out of a possible 100 in the global freedom rankings. That ties Tibet with Syria as the worst on the list.

This year's report marks a change from the last several years, when Tibet was second in the rankings behind Syria. Last year, Syria's score was 0/100, but it has improved to 1/100 in this survey period, thus tying with Tibet as the least-free state or territory.

"The fact that Tibet is now tied for worst in Freedom House's global freedom scores is a clear sign of just how bad things have become in Tibet," International Campaign for Tibet Interim President Bhuchung K. Tsering said. "We hope this ranking will serve as a reminder to the world about the urgent need to take action for Tibet."

### Lack of freedom

Freedom House says its full 2021 report on Tibet will be available soon. Its global freedom score for Tibet includes minus 2 out of a possible 40 for political rights and 3 out of a possible 60 for civil liberties.

In recent years, China has stepped up its repression in Tibet, which the Chinese government has brutally occupied for more than six decades.

- China is planning to appoint its own, fake Dalai Lama once the 85-year-old Tibetan spiritual leader eventually dies. The Chinese government has made it law that Tibetan lamas must receive government approval before they reincarnate.
- According to researcher Adrian Zenz, China has created a large-scale coercive labor program in the Tibet Autonomous Region, which spans about half of Tibet. This program pushed more than half a million rural Tibetans off their land and into military-style training centers in just the first seven months of 2020.
- China is also taking aim at Tibet's language. Last year, Human Rights Watch published a report exposing how the Chinese government is replacing Tibetan with Chinese as the language of instruction in Tibetan schools.
- Chen Quanguo, the architect of the ongoing genocide of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, previously served as China's top leader in the Tibet Autonomous Region, where he developed a system of mass surveillance and militarization that has only grown since.

- More than 500 Tibetan political prisoners are currently in China’s brutal prisons, where they routinely face torture and abuse simply for exercising their basic rights.
- Since 2009, more than 155 Tibetans have self-immolated, lighting their own bodies on fire in a desperate protest against China’s destruction of their culture and way of life.

## Support for Tibet

In contrast to China’s rising repression, governments around the world are increasingly speaking out in support of the Tibetan people.

- At the end of 2020, the US passed the Tibetan Policy and Support Act, a far-reaching piece of legislation that dramatically upgrades US support for Tibet. The new law makes it official US policy that only the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Buddhist community can decide on his succession.
- The US also passed the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act in 2018, taking aim at China’s unfair policy of keeping Americans journalists, diplomats and ordinary citizens out of Tibet. As part of RATA, the State Department announced last summer that it had banned Chinese officials from entering the US over their role in keeping Americans out of Tibet.
- President Biden issued a statement during his campaign saying that the “Biden-Harris administration will stand up for the people of Tibet.” Biden promised to push the Chinese government to give Americans access to Tibet and to return to direct negotiations with the representatives of the Tibetan people.
- Officials in other governments have also recently spoken up for Tibet, including Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and the European Union.



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