



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Religious freedom commission: China's control of Tibetan Buddhism 'pervasive'

<https://savetibet.org/religious-freedom-commission-chinas-control-of-tibetan-buddhism-pervasive>

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The US Commission on International Religious Freedom's 2021 Annual Report, released on April 21, says that the "Chinese government continued its pervasive control and suppression of Tibetan Buddhism" in 2020.

The report makes several references to Tibet, where the Chinese government enforces [severe restrictions](#) on Tibetan Buddhists' right to practice their beliefs and follow the teachings of their religious leaders.

The report mentions the Seventh Tibet Work Forum held in August 2020 where "Chinese Communist Party (CCP) General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized the importance of sinicizing [Tibetan Buddhism](#) to make it compatible with Chinese socialism." It says after the meeting, Chinese authorities organized seminars at Tibetan Buddhist monasteries to indoctrinate monks and nuns.

Report findings:

Following are some of the other Tibet-related issues touched on in the report.

- Chinese authorities generally banned Tibetans, including students and government workers, from participating in traditional religious gatherings. And they detained and punished Tibetans for listening to the [Dalai Lama's teachings](#) or having his photo.
- China's repression of Tibetan Buddhists didn't stop in Tibet. In September, US authorities [arrested an NYPD officer for spying on local Tibetans](#) for China. Similar spying and harassment has taken place in [Canada](#), [Sweden](#) and Switzerland.
- China's [digital authoritarianism](#)—honed and refined on Uyghurs and Tibetans—has become attractive to repressive regimes around the world that might seek to replicate the "China model," resulting in religious freedom violations.
- At the same time, countries around the world have stood up to China's repression of Tibetan Buddhists and other people of faith.

Recommendations

The report calls for the Biden administration to enforce the [Tibetan Policy and Support Act](#) "to the fullest extent." The TPSA, which dramatically upgrades US support for Tibetans, [became law at the end of 2020](#).

The commission also recommends the State Department promptly appoint a highly qualified special coordinator for Tibetan issues. This position, which the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 created, serves to promote substantive dialogue between the Chinese government and the representatives of the Dalai Lama. The special coordinator also works closely with NGOs and the public.

It also calls on the administration to publicly express concerns about Beijing hosting the 2022 Winter Olympic Games and state that US government officials will not attend the games if the Chinese government's crackdown on religious freedom continues.

Overall, it recommends that the State Department continue to designate China as a "country of particular concern," or CPC, under the International Religious Freedom Act.

No reference to Dalai Lama succession

The report, however, fails to highlight a major development in 2020 that is part of the Chinese government's plan to strengthen its control over Tibetan Buddhism by laying claim over the succession of the Dalai Lama.

In 2020, during a meeting of the Tibet Autonomous Region Party Committee's National Security Committee, [Wu Yingjie, secretary of the TAR Party Committee, directed](#) officials to manage the religious community and to thwart the Tibetan monastic community's devotion to the Dalai Lama.

During [a video conference for](#) the development of "education activities" on "Complying with the Four Standards to be Advanced Monks and Nuns" in April 2020, Liu Zhiqiang, deputy secretary of the party committee in Lhoka (Chinese: Shannan) City, ordered a "focus on dealing with the major political struggles of the 14th Dalai Lama's death and reincarnation" for stability maintenance.

In another report by Chamdo City United Front Work Department, the Management Committee of Yizhang Monastery in Lhorong (Luolong) County, Chamdo (Changdu) City organized all monks in the monastery to study the "Management Measures for the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism" in May 2020.

The classes required the monks to abide by the policies and laws of the party and state regarding reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhist teachers in accordance with the government's version of the history, religious rituals and procedures for Tibetan Buddhism.

No suggestion to the Administration on the Panchen Lama

The report came out four days before the 32nd birthday of the Panchen Lama and less than a month before the anniversary of his [abduction by the Chinese government](#) in 1995.

The Panchen Lama has been held in secret by the Chinese government since then, but the report does not touch his issue.

It has a photo of the Panchen Lama, and one of the commissioners is listed as his advocate, but there is no recommendation on what the Biden administration should be doing in his case.

The full USCIRF report for 2021 can be [read here](#).



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