



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Nepal: Government denies rights of Tibetan refugees in UN review

Read online: <https://savetibet.org/nepal-government-denies-rights-of-tibetan-refugees-in-un-review>

July 8, 2021

The Nepali government failed to commit to respecting and protecting the rights of Tibetan refugees in the country during the United Nations (UN) Universal Periodic Review (UPR), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and its member organization International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) denounced today.

The government “noted” (i.e. did not accept) important recommendations it received from UN member states regarding Tibetan refugees on 21 January 2021, as part of the country’s third UPR cycle. The UPR report of Nepal will be adopted on 8 July, during the 47th session of the UN Human Rights Council.

“Nepal should be praised for hosting thousands of Tibetan refugees for decades, but this is not enough. Sheltering refugees must also mean giving them full protection in accordance with relevant international human rights principles and treaties. The Nepali government must take urgent steps to grant legal status to Tibetans and ensure their fundamental rights are respected and protected,” said FIDH Secretary-General Adilur Rahman Khan.

The government failed to accept a key recommendation that called for the registration and verification of all Tibetan refugees, followed by the issuance of identity documents. Lack of documentation is at the root of many of the challenges Tibetan refugees face in Nepal, including lack of access to education, legal work opportunities, or medical and other government services. This lack of legal status leaves them vulnerable to crime and human rights violations with no recourse before the law.

Similarly, another recommendation that called on Kathmandu to step up efforts in the fight against segregation and discrimination of ethnic minorities, including Tibetans, did not enjoy the government’s support.

The government also refused to accept two other recommendations that called for the respect of the principle of non-refoulement. Despite evidence to the contrary, in its response to these recommendations, the government claimed it was abiding by this fundamental principle that stipulates no one should be returned to a country where they would face persecution or danger.

Lastly, the government did not accept all three recommendations calling for the ratification of the 1951 Refugee Convention, and one recommendation that called for the adoption of national legislation in accordance with international standards on the protection of refugees.

“The responses given by the Nepali government during the UPR are insufficient to guarantee the fundamental human rights and the legal status that Tibetans living in the country deserve. The government must commit to further measures to protect Tibetans as well as refugees transiting from Tibet to India,” said Head of the ICT’s UN team Kai Müller.

On a positive note, the government accepted many recommendations that, if adequately and effectively implemented, could address some of the human rights challenges that Tibetans face in Nepal. Such recommendations called on the government to: ensure the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly (six recommendations); protect the rights of vulnerable groups, including ethnic minorities

(four recommendations); and protect the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities (one recommendation).

Tibetans who have publicly expressed opinions about the human rights situation in Tibet and displayed objects referring to Tibetan national symbols or political activism have been subjected to arrests and harassment in Nepal. Tibetans have also faced restrictions on religious and political celebrations and Nepali authorities have continued to impose bans on their public gatherings.



International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) | 1825 Jefferson Place NW | Washington, DC 20036 | United States of America
Phone: (202) 785-1515 | Fax: (202) 785-4343 | info@savetibet.org

ICT Europe
Funenpark 1D | 1018 AK
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266
icteurope@savetibet.nl

ICT Deutschland e.V.
Schönhauser Allee 163 | 10435
Berlin, Germany
Phone: +49 (0)30 27879086
Fax: +49 (0)30 27879087
info@savetibet.de

ICT Brussels
11, rue de la linière | 1060
Brussels, Belgium
Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32
info@save-tibet.eu