



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### ICT statement at UN Asia-Pacific Forum on Minority Issues

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September 7, 2021

BRUSSELS—The International Campaign for Tibet today delivered a statement at the 3rd UN Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Minority Issues, calling for an end to policies of Sinicization in Tibet and for a resumption of the Sino-Tibetan dialogue. The forum is taking place virtually on September 7 and 8 and focuses on “Conflict prevention and the protection of the Human Rights of the Minorities.”

The regional forum is convened by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Fernand de Varennes, and organized by the Tom Lantos Institute in cooperation with a number of regional organizations. Special Rapporteur de Varennes stated that in recent decades the number of conflicts in the world has increased and that most of them were internal conflicts involving minorities or indigenous groups who feel excluded and marginalized.

The participants from civil society organizations provided information and recommendations from their respective regions, which will feed the next general forum on minority issues, which is to take place on December 2 and 3, as well as the annual report of the special rapporteur to be presented at the 49th UN Human Rights Council Session in March next year. 2022 will mark the 30th anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.

ICT’s EU policy director, Vincent Metten, suggested concrete recommendations to the Chinese government, including with regard to resumption of the Sino-Tibetan dialogue and a call to not interfere in the process of succession of Tibetan Buddhist leaders. Metten stated: “Given the deep reverence of the exiled Dalai Lama in Tibet and the publicised plans by the Chinese Communist Party to appoint a successor to the Dalai Lama, we fear that Tibetans will certainly express their grievances through protests. Such protests would most probably be met with repression and force by the authorities, potentially leading to grave human rights violations and violent conflict.”

ICT’s full statement is below. The video and audio recording will be publicly available on the Tom Lantos Institutes YouTube channel, website and [www.minorityforum.info](http://www.minorityforum.info).

#### **ICT Statement**

*Dear Special Rapporteur de Varennes,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*For more than seven decades now, the civil and political rights of Tibetans, as well as their social, economic and cultural rights have been violated. The control and surveillance of Tibetans have expanded under President Xi Jinping. The Tibetan culture is seen as a threat to the Chinese Communist Party, which in turn implements wide-ranging policies to sinicize Tibetan culture. We are convinced that such policies are not only in breach of international human rights standards, but also exacerbate existing tensions and create new conflict.*

*As Tibetans do not resort to violence, the situation in Tibet remains a silent crisis as illustrated by the self-immolations of more than 150 Tibetans since 2009, many of whom have called for a return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet.*

*Given the deep reverence of the exiled Dalai Lama in Tibet and the publicised plans by the Chinese Communist Party to appoint a successor to the Dalai Lama, we fear that Tibetans will certainly express their grievances through protests. Such protests would most probably be met with repression and force by the authorities, potentially leading to grave human rights violations and violent conflict.*

*In order to prevent such a conflict, we urge the Chinese leadership to resume the Sino-Tibetan dialogue. The newly elected head of the Central Tibetan Administration, Mr Penpa Tsering, has reaffirmed the willingness of the Tibetan side to resume this dialogue process. We consider this as a concrete step to conflict resolution, which, if taken by the Chinese government, could have a tremendously positive impact on the entire region and beyond.*

*Secondly, we call on the Chinese government to ensure the right of Tibetan Buddhists to determine their religious leaders in accordance with their own religious traditions and practices. Policies of “sinicization” must be abolished, as they aim to undermine the cultural identity of the Tibetan people.*

*Finally, we support and advocate for the specific recommendation made by 50 Special Procedures for the creation of a special mechanism to monitor and report on the human rights situation in China, including in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Hong Kong. It is important that the Chinese government faces scrutiny for human rights violations, despite their efforts to set a norm of impunity.*

*Thank you for your attention*

*Vincent Metten*



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