



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### **New Tibet special coordinator meets with ICT, outlines objectives**

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New Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Uzra Zeya met with leaders of the International Campaign for Tibet this afternoon just days after taking office and laying out US objectives for supporting the Tibetan people.

Zeya, the under secretary of state for civilian security, democracy and human rights, began serving as the special coordinator for Tibetan issues in the US State Department on Monday, Dec. 20, 2021.

Today, Dec. 22, Zeya met virtually with ICT's Interim President Bhuchung K. Tsering, Interim Vice President Tencho Gyatso and Director of Government Relations Franz Matzner. ICT is an advocacy group based in Washington, DC and Europe that promotes human rights and democratic freedoms for the Tibetan people.

Zeya also met separately today with Namgyal Choedup, the representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration to North America.

### **Role and responsibilities**

In her new role, Zeya will coordinate US government policies, programs and projects related to Tibetan issues.

Tibet, a country in the Himalayan region of Asia, has lived under the Chinese government's brutal occupation for over 60 years, with the watchdog group Freedom House recently declaring Tibet the least-free country on Earth in a tie with Syria.

After her appointment on Monday, Zeya shared a video on social media saying she's honored that Secretary of State Anthony Blinken appointed her to the position.

In the video, Zeya also lists several of the United States' commitments to Tibet and the Tibetan people.

### **Human rights, dialogue and reciprocity**

Zeya says the US is "committed to promoting respect for the human rights of Tibetans and helping to preserve their distinct historical, linguistic, cultural and religious heritage."

She adds that, "Direct dialogue without preconditions between the government of the People's Republic of China and His Holiness the Dalai Lama or his representatives is essential to resolve differences and achieve meaningful autonomy for Tibetans." The Chinese government has refused to negotiate in good faith with Tibetan leaders for over a decade.

Zeya says the US also seeks to ensure that American diplomats, journalists and tourists have access to Tibet that is "reciprocal to the access PRC officials and other Chinese nationals enjoy in the United States."

The Chinese government routinely denies Americans the right to enter Tibet, even though Chinese citizens are free to travel throughout the United States. This unfair situation led Congress in 2018 to pass the Reciprocal

Access to Tibet Act, which resulted in the US banning Chinese officials from entering the United States over their role in keeping Americans out of Tibet.

## **Repression, environment and humanitarian assistance**

In the video, Zeya states that the PRC “must also cease its harassment, intimidation and surveillance of Tibetan diaspora communities in the United States and elsewhere.

“Such acts,” she says, “known as transnational repression, undermine our collective security.”

Zeya also addresses the environmental crisis in Tibet, which is a source of crucial biodiversity and essential water supplies for surrounding countries.

“The United States seeks to support protection of the environment and water resources of the Tibetan Plateau,” Zeya says.

Zeya adds that the US is “proud to be providing humanitarian assistance to Tibetan refugees, including life-saving assistance and protection services to the most vulnerable and to supporting opportunities to enhance their livelihoods.”

She concludes the video by saying, “As special coordinator, I look forward to taking on these challenges and working closely with Tibetans and other partners to advance our shared goals.”



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