



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### **As Beijing Olympics end, world must hold China accountable**

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February 17, 2022

#### STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET:

After the last Beijing Olympics in 2008, the world looked away as China clamped down on Tibet, committed genocide against the Uyghurs and crushed democracy in Hong Kong. As this year's Olympics come to an end, the world must keep the pressure on the Chinese government, or there may soon be no unique Tibetan, Uyghur or Hong Kong cultures left to protect.

Both the International Olympic Committee and the Chinese government initially sought recourse not to take any action on human rights with the excuse that the Olympic Games should not be mixed with politics. But the most recent assertion by a Beijing organizing committee spokeswoman that “Taiwan is an indivisible part of China” clearly shows that it is China that has been mixing sports and politics all along.

The International Campaign for Tibet calls on governments, international organizations, businesses and media to keep the Chinese government accountable following this year's Olympics. In the case of Tibet—which Freedom House ranks as the least-free country on Earth in a tie with Syria—the international community can do several things to help prevent a repeat of what happened in Tibet after 2008.

### **Demand access for media, diplomats**

Tibet is one of the most closed-off countries in the world. Just recently, the Associated Press reported that a journalist traveling to Tibet during the 2022 Olympics was pulled off a bus by Chinese police and told, “No foreigners are allowed in.” In 2016, a Washington Post article said the Tibet Autonomous Region, which spans about half of Tibet, “is harder to visit as a journalist than North Korea.”

Four years ago, the United States passed the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, which takes aim at the Chinese government's unfair policy of keeping American journalists, diplomats and tourists out of Tibet, even though their Chinese counterparts can travel freely throughout the US. Under RATA, the US government has banned Chinese officials from entering the country because of their role in preventing Americans from entering Tibet.

Other countries should pass similar legislation. In addition, foreign media should continue to try to visit Tibet so they can report freely and accurately on China's repression there.

### **Protect the Dalai Lama's succession**

The Chinese government has made clear it plans to name its own reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader who is now 86. This outrageous plan by China's atheist, Communist regime is not only an affront to the religious practices of Tibetan Buddhists around the globe. It's also a threat to international religious freedom: If China gets away with appointing its own Dalai Lama, it will feel even more emboldened to persecute people of faith.

At the end of 2020, the US passed the Tibetan Policy and Support Act, which dramatically upgraded US support for Tibet, including by making it official US policy that only the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Buddhist

community can decide on his succession. The TPSA also requires the State Department to work at the international level to build support for Tibetan Buddhists' freedom to choose their own leaders without government interference.

All countries around the world should support the religious freedom of the Tibetan people and the authority of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Buddhists on the issue of reincarnation. They should reject any Dalai Lama selected by the atheist Chinese regime.

## **Push for resumed dialogue**

After more than 60 years of illegally occupying Tibet, the Chinese government still has not won over the hearts and minds of most Tibetans. The only way China can bring lasting peace and stability to the region is to negotiate directly with Tibetan leaders. Unfortunately, despite Tibetans' willingness to negotiate in good faith, the Sino-Tibetan dialogue has been dormant since 2010.

Governments around the world should push China to resume dialogue with the representatives of the Dalai Lama. Direct negotiations can not only give Tibetans the human rights and autonomy that all people deserve; they can also provide China with a permanent, peaceful solution to the Tibetan issue.

## **Resources for journalists**

The International Campaign for Tibet has a number of resources available for journalists, including a briefing paper on how China's repression in Tibet skyrocketed after the 2008 Olympics. Journalists can also visit ICT's Olympics pages for more statistics and stories about the Olympics and Tibet in English and in German.

To speak to ICT's leaders, experts or researchers, reporters should contact Communications Officer Ashwin Verghese at [press@savetibet.org](mailto:press@savetibet.org) or +1 202-580-6772.



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