



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Postpone trip to China, NGOs tell UN High Commissioner

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BERLIN—The International Campaign for Tibet and over 220 other nongovernmental organizations today urged UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet to postpone her upcoming trip to China “or risk walking into a propaganda minefield laid out by the Chinese Communist Party.”

In a joint statement, the organizations warn that under her current plans, the High Commissioner risks supporting Beijing's propaganda efforts to deny or whitewash repression against Tibetans, Uyghurs, pro-democracy movements in Hong Kong and China, and communities in Inner Mongolia (Southern Mongolia to the Mongols).

Bachelet is scheduled to visit China later this month.

“There is no doubt that the United Nations urgently needs to investigate human rights abuses against Uyghurs, Tibetans, Hong Kongers and Chinese human rights defenders,” ICT Germany Executive Director Kai Mueller said. “This includes such investigative trips by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. But such trips must not take place at any price if there is a significant risk that the government involved will prevent free and independent access in the country and exploit the trip for propaganda purposes.

“This is exactly what we fear, especially since the UN High Commissioner is silent about the circumstances of the trip, and, even with the trip fast approaching, no in-depth consultations with civil society organizations have taken place.”

Tibet

Tibetan groups in particular have criticized the fact that the High Commissioner obviously does not want to visit Tibet, which China has illegally occupied for over 60 years, turning it into the least-free country on Earth in a tie with South Sudan and Syria, according to the watchdog group Freedom House.

ICT last week expressed great concern about the lack of transparency in Bachelet's travel arrangements. Previously, numerous groups demanded clarification about the circumstances of her trip.

Unlike her predecessors in office, Michelle Bachelet has not once spoken out about the egregious human rights situation in Tibet since she took office in 2018.

UN experts

In their statement today, the organizations reiterate their support for the demands made by 50 UN human rights experts in June 2020. Those demands included "firm measures to protect fundamental freedoms in China" and the introduction by the UN Human Rights Council of "mechanisms for close monitoring, analysis and annual reporting of the human rights situation in China."



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