



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

State Department report highlights China's persecution of Tibetan Buddhism

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Secretary of State Antony Blinken said today China is persecuting practitioners of religions “that it deems out of line with Chinese Communist Party doctrine,” including by destroying Buddhist houses of worship, and referenced discrimination faced by Tibetan Buddhists.

Blinken was speaking at the release of the 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom at the State Department, which was also addressed by Rashad Hussain, Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom.

Hussain, in his remarks, said that too many governments use discriminatory laws to persecute religious practitioners. He added that China “continued its crackdown on Tibetan Buddhists. Authorities arrested, tortured and committed other abuses against Tibetans who promoted their language and culture, possessed pictures and writings of the Dalai Lama, or practiced their religion at Buddhist monasteries.”

China has illegally occupied Tibet 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.

Documenting China's repression

The Tibet section of the report is divided into four sections: Religious Demography; Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom; Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom; and U.S. Government Policy and Engagement.

The report refers to the regulations that Chinese authorities have been issuing to “control the registration of monasteries, nunneries, and other Tibetan Buddhist religious centers.” It says individuals in Tibet have to apply to the “CCP Committee to take up religious orders, and the committee may deny any application.”

It further says the Chinese “government continued to place restrictions on the size of Buddhist monasteries and other institutions and to implement a campaign begun in 2016 to evict monks and nuns from monasteries.”

In a reference to one of China's most notorious violations of religious freedom, the report notes that “the whereabouts of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, recognized as the 11th Panchen Lama by the Dalai Lama and most Tibetan Buddhists, remained unknown since his 1995 forced disappearance by Chinese authorities.”

US legislation on Tibet

The report also refers to the impact of recent Tibet legislation, stating that “during the year, the U.S. government used a variety of diplomatic tools to promote religious freedom and accountability in Tibet, including continuing visa restrictions on [People's Republic of China] government and CCP officials that the U.S. government had determined to be ‘substantially involved in the formulation or execution of policies related to access for foreigners to Tibetan areas,’ pursuant to the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018.”

The report also heavily quotes the International Campaign for Tibet’s “Party Above Buddhism” report, which documents policy and institutional changes that force Tibetan monks and nuns to serve the interests of the Communist Party.



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