



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

US sanctions on Chinese officials raise pressure on Beijing

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The Biden administration's sanctioning of two Chinese officials over their abuse of Tibetans' human rights builds pressure on China's government to resolve its longstanding conflict in Tibet, the International Campaign for Tibet said today.

Coinciding with Human Rights Day on Dec. 10, 2022, the US Department of the Treasury instituted sanctions on Wu Yingjie and Zhang Hongbo. Wu was the Tibet Autonomous Region Party Secretary between 2016 and 2021 and Zhang was director of the TAR Public Security Bureau from 2018 to this year. Both were accused of "serious human rights abuse" of the Tibetan people and included in a list of 40 sanctioned individuals from nine countries.

Under the sanctions, the US freezes Wu's and Zhang's property in the United States and Zhang and his family are specifically barred from entering the country.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry on Dec. 12 responded to the US sanctions of Wu and Zhang, saying, "Affairs related to Tibet are purely China's internal affairs and brook no interference from any other country."

The International Campaign for Tibet said today: "By sanctioning Chinese officials for their human rights violations against Tibetans, the US has once again put the spotlight on the dire situation in Tibet. The Communist regime's decades-long, brutal occupation of Tibet has been a model for its abuse of Uyghurs, Hong Kongers, Mongolians and Chinese. The Biden administration should be applauded for raising pressure on Beijing through these sanctions."

Promoting a resolution to the Tibet-China conflict

The next step, ICT said, is for the US Congress to pass the bipartisan Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Conflict Act. This legislation provides a pathway to solving the Tibetan issue while keeping in consideration Chinese interests.

At the same time, the bill enables the United States to protect the rights of the Tibetan people until China resumes the dialogue process with Tibetan leaders—which has been dormant since 2010—and takes it to its logical conclusion.

ICT also strongly believes that other governments and international bodies, in particular the European Union, should follow this initiative by the United States. The EU should actively promote the extension of sanctions to those individuals and entities in the Chinese state and party apparatus responsible for systematic human rights violations in Tibet. In particular, it should consult nongovernmental organizations and take their suggestions into account.

About Wu Yingjie

Wu served in the Tibet Autonomous Region—which spans about half of Tibet—for many years prior to his elevation to the highest post of Party Secretary in 2016.

In his first statement as Party Secretary, Wu declared the vital importance of a deepened “struggle” against the Dalai Lama, using retrograde political language stating that the authorities must “expand positive propaganda, thoroughly expose and criticize the Dalai.”

He also served as Commander of the TAR “Stability Maintenance Corps” and is associated with a harsh and violent crackdown, particularly in Nagchu (Chinese: Naqu) prefecture-level city. The Stability Maintenance Corps is based on Chinese leader Xi Jinping’s focus on “long-term stability”—political propaganda for the eradication of dissent and enforcement of compliance to Chinese Communist Party policies.

Wu, who was born in Shangdong, began his career at the Central Party School in Beijing and, unusually for a TAR Party Secretary, spent virtually his entire career in Tibet, beginning in the closing years of the Cultural Revolution on a farm in Nyingtri (Chinese: Linzhi). He even went as far as claiming himself as a “local Tibetan,” saying that he was “brought up by the Party, the people, the Tibetan Plateau and all the ethnic groups of Tibet” and that he loves “the land and the hardworking people here.”

Wu said there should be a “clear-cut stand to eliminate the negative influence of the 14th Dalai Lama’s use of religion, and guide the religious believers to treat religion rationally, downplay the negative influence of religion, and live a happy life for this lifetime.”

The Treasury Department emphasized that Wu’s “policies involved serious human rights abuse, including extrajudicial killings, physical abuse, arbitrary arrests, and mass detentions in the TAR. Additional abuses ... include forced sterilization, coerced abortion, restrictions on religious and political freedoms, and the torture of prisoners.”

About Zhang Hongbo

As the director of the TAR Public Security Bureau, Zhang Hongbo oversaw the institutionalization of initiatives to suppress Tibetan rights. The Biden administration said, “During Zhang’s tenure, the TPSB engaged in serious human rights abuse, including at TPSB-run detention centers that were involved in the torture, physical abuse, and killings of prisoners, which included those arrested on religious and political grounds.”

Zhang was head of the Public Security Bureau when the nationwide political campaign in China against “black” and “evil forces” was used as an excuse in Tibet to crack down on “separatism in the name of religion” and loyalty to the Dalai Lama.

The US further said Zhang and his immediate family members are ineligible for entry into the United States under Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act for his involvement in a gross violation of human rights.



International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) | 1825 Jefferson Place NW | Washington, DC 20036 | United States of America
Phone: (202) 785-1515 | Fax: (202) 785-4343 | info@savetibet.org

ICT Europe
Funenpark 1D | 1018 AK
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266
icteurope@savetibet.nl

ICT Deutschland e.V.
Schönhauser Allee 163 | 10435
Berlin, Germany
Phone: +49 (0)30 27879086
Fax: +49 (0)30 27879087
info@savetibet.de

ICT Brussels
11, rue de la linière | 1060
Brussels, Belgium
Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32
info@save-tibet.eu