



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### **Tiananmen Massacre anniversary: China must respect human rights and democracy**

<http://www.savetibet.org/tiananmen-massacre-anniversary-china-must-respect-human-rights-and-democracy>

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STATEMENT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET:

On the 34th anniversary of the Chinese government massacring its own people in Tiananmen Square, it's time for China's leaders to respect universal values of human rights and democracy.

On June 4, 1989, the Chinese People's Liberation Army viciously attacked Chinese activists who had gathered in the square in Beijing calling for democracy and political reform. Some estimates say thousands of people were killed.

Although China's military brutally crushed the protesters, and there have been systematic attempts to distort and rewrite history and suppress the memory of the events of Tiananmen Square, the spirit of resistance has not died in China in the 34 years since.

Just a few months ago, demonstrations erupted across the People's Republic of China against the government's zero-COVID policy.

The protests were inspired in part by a lone activist in Beijing—dubbed Bridge Man or Banner Man in honor of the unknown Tank Man from Tiananmen Square—who bravely hung banners on the Sitong Bridge lambasting Chinese leader Xi Jinping and his government.

"We don't want [dictatorial] leaders, we want elections," the banners said in part. "We don't want to be slaves, we want to be citizens."

### **Tibet then and now**

The zero-COVID protests were the largest in China since Tiananmen Square in 1989.

That same year, the [Chinese government declared martial law in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa](#) following three days of protest in response to the shooting of Tibetans by security police in the Barkor, an important religious site.

At least 70 Tibetans were shot dead from March 5-7, 1989, and unofficial reports say at least 1,000 Tibetans were detained.

In nearly three-and-a-half decades since, the situation in Tibet has only gotten worse.

Earlier this year, the watchdog group [Freedom House declared Tibet the least-free country on Earth](#) alongside South Sudan and Syria. This is the third year in a row that Tibet has ranked at the bottom of Freedom House's global freedom scores.

[China has illegally occupied Tibet for over six decades](#), forcing the Dalai Lama into exile in 1959.

## Resolving the Tibet-China conflict

Although Tibetans face greater repression from Beijing due to their unique ethnicity, they share with their brothers and sisters in China—as well as Uyghurs, Hong Kongers, Mongolians, and others—a desire to have their basic freedoms respected by the Chinese government.

In the US, earlier this year, Democratic and Republican members of the US House and Senate reintroduced a bill that can help Tibetans resolve the Tibet-China conflict through peaceful dialogue.

The [Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Conflict Act](#) will strengthen pressure on the Chinese government to resume negotiations with Tibetan leaders, which has stalled since 2010. The bipartisan bill will recognize that Tibetans have a right to self-determination and that China's policies preclude them from exercising that right.

In Europe, in a [statement](#) before the parliament in April this year, the German government stated that “as part of their policy of assimilation directed against the Tibetan language, culture and religion, the Chinese authorities systematically violated human rights” and called for an end to coercive boarding schools for Tibetan children and forced resettlement in Tibet.

Thirty-four years after brutally cracking down on Tibetans in Tibet and Chinese in Tiananmen Square, the Chinese government must listen to the voices of those it rules over. It must sit down with Tibetan leaders and resolve the Tibet-China conflict.



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