



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

House letter: US should highlight Tibet at UN China review

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The Biden administration should make sure the US highlights increasingly severe Chinese human rights abuses against Tibetans during China's Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council next month, several Congress members say in a new letter.

In their letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, over 20 members of the House say that since China's last review in 2018, "the situation with regard to the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the people of Tibet has deteriorated significantly."

Chinese government policies are "eroding Tibetan Buddhism, Tibetan language, and the Tibetan way of life in ways that are widespread and systematic and constitute a fundamental threat to the survival and well-being of the Tibetan people," says the bipartisan letter led by Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass.

China's Universal Periodic Review will take place Jan. 23 in Geneva. The review is a mechanism of the Human Rights Council to assess the human rights record of every UN member state every four to five years.

China, one of the world's most notorious human rights abusers, has [occupied Tibet for about 65 years](#), turning it into the [least-free country on Earth](#) alongside South Sudan and Syria, according to the watchdog group Freedom House.

"The PRC is implementing policies that threaten the survival and well-being of the Tibetan people," said Congressman Jim McGovern. "The Biden administration must use China's upcoming Universal Periodic Review to shine a light on directives that are clearly designed to erode the Tibetan way of life. China has human rights obligations for which its government must be held accountable."

"I hope Secretary Blinken will take this letter to heart and commit to pressing Beijing on its human rights abuses in Tibet," International Campaign for Tibet President Tencho Gyatso said. *"The message from Capitol Hill is clear: China's behavior in Tibet is unacceptable, and the United States must ensure that this latest Universal Periodic Review reflects the facts."*

Letter from Congress members

China's upcoming Universal Periodic Review will be its fourth.

According to the Congress members' letter, the review "offers an important opportunity for the United States to shine a light on the human rights violations committed by the Chinese government in Tibet and against the Tibetan people."

The US delegation at the review "should raise the situation in Tibet in its advanced questions and offer specific recommendations to the [People's Republic of China] government during the process," the letter adds.

“By doing so, the United States can play a pivotal role in the protection of human rights and the preservation of the full range of human rights of the Tibetan people,” says the letter.

The letter is signed by Reps. McGovern; André Carson, D-Ind.; Lloyd Doggett, D-Texas; Raúl Grijalva, D-Ariz.; Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash.; Henry Johnson, D-Ga.; Young Kim, R-Calif.; Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Ill.; Barbara Lee, D-Calif.; Ted Lieu, D-Calif.; Nicole Malliotakis, R-N.Y.; Seth Moulton, D-Mass.; Betty McCollum, D-Minn.; Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-D.C.; Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.; Mark Pocan, D-Wis.; Jamie Raskin, D-Md.; Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill.; Brad Sherman, D-Calif.; Mikie Sherrill, D-N.J.; Haley Stevens, D-Mich.; Shri Thanedar, D-Mich.; Dina Titus, D-Nev.; and Jennifer Wexton, D-Va.

Human rights abuses against Tibetans

The letter lists some of [China’s many human rights abuses against the Tibetan people](#), including its coercive state-run boarding school system that has [separated over 1 million Tibetan children from their families, language and religion](#). China’s “bilingual education” policy has replaced Tibetan with Mandarin as the medium of education, the letter says.

The boarding schools are part of China’s campaign of “Sinification,” which seeks to [eliminate Tibetans’ unique identity](#) and force them to assimilate into Chinese culture. Recently, China has even tried to [replace the internationally recognized name “Tibet”](#) with the Chinese-language word “Xizang.”

According to the letter, China’s labor transfer and training schemes are changing the demographic balance in the Tibet Autonomous Region—an administrative area that spans less than half of Tibet—while its coercive relocation and resettlement programs uproot Tibetans from their traditional homes.

The letter notes that several UN bodies have documented these abuses, including the [Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#), the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, as well as independent UN special procedures.

US support for Tibet

For decades, the US government and the American people have shown [consistent, bipartisan support for Tibetans](#) and their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

The letter from House members adds to growing momentum in US efforts to seek a peaceful resolution to China’s occupation of Tibet.

Just last month, the House Foreign Affairs Committee [unanimously approved the Resolve Tibet Act](#). The legislation, whose full name is the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, will pressure the Chinese government to get back to the negotiating table with Tibetan leaders for the first time since 2010.

The Resolve Tibet Act builds on previous bipartisan US legislation on Tibet, including the [Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020](#) and the [Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018](#).

Biden administration

The Biden administration has also taken action to support the Tibetan people.

Earlier this year, [Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced sanctions on Chinese officials](#) for their “forcible assimilation of more than one million Tibetan children in government-run boarding schools.”

In 2022, the [Treasury Department sanctioned two Chinese officials](#) involved in “serious human rights abuse” in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

During his campaign for the White House in 2020, [President Joe Biden promised to “stand up for the people of Tibet,”](#) saying: “My administration will sanction Chinese officials responsible for human rights abuses in Tibet, and step up support for the Tibetan people.”

[Read the House members’ letter.](#)



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