



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

ICT urges China to stop discriminating and disempowering Tibetans at UN Forum

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The International Campaign for Tibet delivered a statement at the 16th “UN Forum on Minority Issues” that took place Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 in Geneva, exposing the discriminatory and disempowering policies Tibetans suffer under Chinese rule.

In his opening remarks, the newly appointed UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues Nicolas Levrat stressed “how guaranteeing and promoting minority specific positions contributes to the richness and cohesion of national societies.” While claiming to respect the rights of so-called minorities, China, in contrast to this, implements systemic discriminatory policies curtailing the rights of Tibetans and Uyghurs to fully and fairly participate in decisions directly impacting their lives and livelihoods. This treatment only exacerbates a myriad of additional human rights violations impacting the very fabric of their civilizations.

In her statement to the forum, ICT’s Policy and Advocacy Officer Mélanie Blondelle illustrated the discrimination and inequalities Tibetans face in all aspects of their lives, including erasure of their mother tongue, which puts them at a disadvantage in the labor market; the forced resettlement of Tibetan nomads, farmers and rural population; and underrepresentation of Tibetans at all levels of government.

“China must stop relegating Tibetans to second-class citizens in their own land, and immediately rescind all policies that block Tibetans’ input on policies that radically affect their daily lives and their identity as a distinct people. Instead, they must be welcomed into the decision-making process at all levels, and given access to the opportunities and benefits created by the development of Tibet,” Blondelle concluded.

Convened annually since 2008, the “Forum on Minority Issues” provides a platform for advancing the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and fostering dialogue and cooperation on issues pertaining to minorities.

The UN special rapporteur on minority issues will present the recommendations of the 16th Forum during the 55th session of the Human Rights Council in March 2024.

Read ICT’s full statement below or [watch on UN Web TV](#) (from 02:57:55).

ICT statement

**16th UN Forum on Minority Issues
30 November-1 December 2023 – Geneva**

Item 1: Challenges to inclusion and equality: barriers to the social and economic participation of persons belonging to minority groups

Statement by the International Campaign for Tibet

Mr. Chair,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The International Campaign for Tibet wishes to highlight the discriminatory, assimilationist and disempowering policies targeting Tibetans in the People's Republic of China.

Today, Tibetans face discrimination in all aspects of their lives, including employment, housing, and travel. Unlike their Han Chinese counterparts, they often experience obstacles in obtaining passports and their freedom of movement is severely impeded. Employment opportunities for Tibetans often provide substandard salaries.

In recent years, the Tibetan language has also been significantly marginalized – including via a vast boarding school system that separates Tibetan children from their families and enforces Chinese-language curriculum. Tibetans are increasingly unable to study in their mother tongue, which places them at an educational and economic disadvantage when competing with Han Chinese for career opportunities.

This marginalization of Tibetans in the labor market is further compounded by a Han-centric development model that exploits Tibet's natural resources but excludes local Tibetans from input and benefits. In particular, we are concerned by the forced resettlement of up to 2 million Tibetan nomads, farmers and rural residents.¹

Tibetans are also vastly underrepresented in leadership positions in party, government, and military, on both provincial and local levels.

It should be noted that the absence of an independent judicial system and lack of access to justice for Tibetans, and overall, the implementation of elements of totalitarian rule by the Chinese authorities, have led to a pervasive climate of fear that precludes the assumption of free, prior and informed consent given by those affected by state measures.

Mr. President, to meet its international obligations, China must stop relegating Tibetans to second-class citizens in their own land, and immediately rescind all policies that block Tibetans' input on policies that radically affect their daily lives and their identity as a distinct people. Instead, they must be welcomed into the decision-making process at all levels, and given access to the opportunities and benefits created by the development of Tibet.

Thank you.

¹ In its Concluding Observations on the third periodic report of China, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural rights reiterated its recommendation that China "take all necessary measures to immediately halt non-voluntary resettlement of all nomadic herders, including Tibetan ones, from their traditional lands and non-voluntary relocation or rehousing programs for other rural residents, such as small-scale farmers." UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 3 March 2023, "Concluding observations on the third periodic report on China", E/C.12/CHN/CO/3.



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@savetibet.eu