



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

French president urged to put human rights, Tibet at heart of Xi Jinping talks

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PARIS—Before Chinese President Xi Jinping's forthcoming visit to France, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and its member organizations the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) and the French Ligue des droits de l'Homme (LDH) are calling on President Emmanuel Macron to place the issue of human rights—particularly in Tibet—at the heart of his discussions with his Chinese interlocutor.

On May 6 and 7, President Xi Jinping will pay an official visit to France, marking his first trip to Europe since 2019. The visit, which follows Macron's trip to China in April 2023, is part of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Franco-Chinese relations.

In an important first, days ahead of the visit, Macron had a timely encounter with the sikyong (president) of the Tibetan government-in-exile Penpa Tsering on April 30 at the Élysée Palace during an award ceremony of the Legion d'Honneur for former Senator André Gattolin, a longstanding friend of Tibet. During the event, Penpa Tsering presented the French president with a photo of his meeting with the Dalai Lama in 2016 autographed by the Tibetan spiritual leader and urged him not to forget Tibet, [according to the Central Tibetan Administration](#) (the official name of the Tibetan government-in-exile). It was a consequential moment, as just a few days earlier, the Chinese government had once again [described](#) the Central Tibetan Administration as a “separatist entity.”

Vincent Metten, EU policy director for the International Campaign for Tibet, said: *"We understand that the agenda between the two presidents will be dense given the many international crises such as in Ukraine and in the Middle East, but this must not be done at the expense of exchanges on human rights, which are in a deplorable state throughout the country as well as in Hong Kong, Xinjiang (Uyghur region) and Tibet, where a latent conflict has been going on for over 60 years and poses a threat to regional and international security."*

Tibet is of strategic importance as a corridor between South and East Asia. Lasting peace in the region can only be achieved through a peaceful resolution of the Tibetan conflict.

[In Freedom House's 2024 report](#), Tibet received a score of negative 2 out of 40 for political rights and a score of 2 out of 60 for civil liberties. [Tibet's overall score of 0 out of 100](#) is its worst in at least eight years.

The Chinese government's aggressive assimilation policy, illustrated by the boarding schools where over 1 million Tibetan children are placed, threatens to eradicate Tibetan culture and identity. This policy was condemned by numerous states during [China's fourth Universal Periodic Review by the United Nations Human Rights Council](#) in January.

"It is important to reshape relations between France and China in order to put human rights at the heart of French foreign policy. President Macron must forcefully denounce, both privately and publicly, the repression in China and in France, the so-called transnational repression, which affects Chinese human

rights activists and defenders, Hong Kongers, Uyghurs and Tibetans," insists Patrick Baudouin, president of the French NGO Ligue des droits de l'Homme.

Ahead of the Chinese president's visit, LDH, FIDH and ICT sent in January 2024 a letter to the French minister of foreign affairs stressing that this visit represents an opportunity to place respect for human rights at the heart of Franco-Chinese relations.

According to **Maryse Artiguelong**, vice-president of LDH and FIDH: "The conflict in Ukraine highlights the threat posed to international order and security by authoritarian regimes such as Russia and the People's Republic of China. Their aggressive foreign policies and repressive domestic policies are inextricably linked: Anyone who does not oppose China's human rights violations risks one day facing its aggressive foreign policy."

A demonstration for the respect of Human Rights in China and Tibet will take place on Sunday, May 5 at 3 pm (CET) in Paris (Place de la République).

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