



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Experts at UN Human Rights Council: Tibetan Rights, Religion and Culture Threatened Amid China's Interference in Dalai Lama Succession

<https://savetibet.org/experts-at-un-human-rights-council-tibetan-rights-religion-and-culture-threatened-amid-chinas-interference-in-dalai-lama-succession>

June 27, 2025

At a high-level side event in Geneva during the 59th session of the UN Human Rights Council on June 27th, organized by the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, international experts issued urgent warnings about the growing threat to religious freedom and the cultural identity of Tibetans due to the Chinese government's interference in the succession of the Dalai Lama.

The well-attended event, titled *"Freedom of Religion and interference in the appointment of religious clergy in Tibet"*, brought together leading Tibetan human rights defenders to highlight the spiritual, cultural, and political implications of China's efforts to control the reincarnation process of Tibetan lamas. It featured a video statement by UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nazila Ghanea.

Tencho Gyatso, President of the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), emphasized in her remarks:

"The Dalai Lama is not only the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism but also the living symbol of Tibetan identity, hope, and resilience. The Chinese Communist Party's claim to control his succession is a blatant violation of religious freedom and an assault on the soul of the Tibetan nation. The international community must firmly reject any politically motivated interference in this sacred tradition."

Gloria Montgomery, legal expert at the Tibet Justice Center, underscored the legal implications of China's actions under international law:

"Tibetan Buddhists have the right to choose their own religious leaders - free from state interference. This is a core principle of international law under Article 18 of the ICCPR and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Any attempt by the Chinese government to appoint or control a future Dalai Lama is a clear violation and must be unequivocally condemned by the international community."

Dr. Gyal Lo, renowned Tibetan education expert and former professor at the Southwest University for Nationalities in Chengdu, spoke powerfully about the systematic indoctrination of Tibetan children in Chinese boarding schools:

"The Chinese government's bid to control the future reincarnation of the Dalai Lama must be seen alongside its bid to control the lives of an entire generation of Tibetan children through the colonial boarding school system. They are two sides of the same coin—two halves of a single plan — one aiming to consolidate China's rule in Tibet, once and for all, by erasing the cultural and spiritual continuity of the Tibetan people."

A special highlight of the event was a video statement by **Nazila Ghanea**, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief. Ms Ghanea stated:

“I wish to reiterate that Tibetan Buddhists must have the right to make independent choices in relation to their cultural and religious expressions in accordance with international human rights law. Such choices include the right to select and appoint their own religious leaders.

“I call on the Chinese government not to interfere in the identification and appointment of Tibetan Buddhist leaders, including any future reincarnation of the current Dalai Lama, which must be determined by the Tibetan people. I also call on the Chinese government to repeal the law concerning the ‘Measures on the Management of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism and cease using of any government databases or registries to monitor, control or legitimise government approved ‘Tibetan Buddhist reincarnations.’ I repeat the call to the Chinese government to disclose the whereabouts of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and ensure his physical and mental wellbeing.”

The event concluded with a strong call to action for UN member states, international institutions, and civil society to take a clear stand against Chinese interference and to defend the Tibetan people’s right to religious and cultural self-determination.

Statements

[Transcript of the statement by UN Special Rapporteur Nazila Ghanea](https://savetibet.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/20250627-Nazila-Ghanea.pdf)

<https://savetibet.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/20250627-Nazila-Ghanea.pdf>

[Statement by Tencho Gyatso, President of the International Campaign for Tibet](https://savetibet.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/20250627-Tencho-Gyatso.pdf)

<https://savetibet.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/20250627-Tencho-Gyatso.pdf>

[Statement by Dr. Gyal Lo, Tibet Action Institute](https://savetibet.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/20250627-Dr-Gyal-Lo.pdf)

<https://savetibet.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/20250627-Dr-Gyal-Lo.pdf>

[Statement by Gloria Montgomery, Tibet Justice Center](https://savetibet.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/20250627-Gloria-Montgomery.pdf)

<https://savetibet.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/20250627-Gloria-Montgomery.pdf>



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