



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

UN Special Rapporteurs' communication on Dalai Lama succession and abducted Panchen Lama welcomed by International Campaign for Tibet

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September 15, 2025

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) strongly welcomes the formal “[Communication](#)” made public over the weekend by United Nations special rapporteurs and working groups to the Chinese government addressing Beijing’s interference in the succession of the Dalai Lama and the enforced disappearance of Tibet’s 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. The concern expressed by the independent UN human rights experts on the Chinese government’s stated intention to appoint a person of their choice as “Dalai Lama” is unprecedented.

The letter was sent jointly by the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues and the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief.

In their “Communication” to the Chinese government – a formal UN instrument to address human rights concerns regarding a member state, – the Special Rapporteurs express “grave concern at the alleged interference by the Government of China into the eventual succession process of the 14th Dalai Lama.” They continue to state that they are “particularly concerned that the regulation of reincarnation of ‘Tibetan living Buddhas’, including by restricting the legitimacy of any reincarnation who might have been born or reside outside of the territory of the People’s Republic of China, may interfere with and possibly undermine, in a discriminatory way, the religious traditions and practices of the Tibetan Buddhist community.” On Tibet’s abducted Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the Special Rapporteurs “remain gravely concerned by the alleged enforced disappearance of six-year-old Gedhun Cheokyi Nyima and his family.”

ICT President Tencho Gyatso stated:

“We commend the principled stance of the five UN Special Mandate Holders. We call on the international community to publicly affirm the Dalai Lama’s [recent statement from July 2](#) and to reiterate the right of Tibetan Buddhists to select religious leaders free from Chinese government interference. While some states have started addressing the issue, more stakeholders must speak out. In particular, we urge the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to publicly and robustly defend Tibetan Buddhists’ fundamental rights and to reject the Chinese government’s intention to appoint a fake Dalai Lama.”

“Governments should warn Chinese leaders that the international community will only recognize the legitimacy of a Tibetan-led succession process, in adherence to the wishes of the 14th Dalai Lama. In addition, the international community should actively monitor the situation going forward and promote accountability for China’s ongoing interference in Tibetan Buddhism, using all relevant tools under international law.



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