



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Tibetan voices at conference on PRC religious freedom

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More than 200 activists, scholars, Congressional staff, and movement leaders gathered in Washington, DC on September 30 for “Faith Under Siege,” a conference on religious persecution and oppression in the People’s Republic of China. ICT President Tencho Gyatso spoke about the need for a strong and coordinated international response to China’s plan to interfere in the succession of the Dalai Lama.

Faith Under Siege was organized by the International Republican Institute in partnership with ICT, the Office of Tibet, and other groups focused on fighting for religious freedom in the PRC. It drew a wide range of advocates for different issues and peoples, including Tibetans, Uighurs, Hong Kongers, Southern Mongolians, Chinese Christians, and more.

“Faith Under Siege gathered people of very different faiths and nationalities,” said ICT President Tencho Gyatso, “but we are all bound in a common struggle against the Chinese Communist Party’s relentless assault on religious freedom. Our work will not stop until our brothers and sisters in Tibet can practice Tibetan Buddhism freely and without fear.”

Tibetan voices

Tibetan speakers were featured in each of the panels. Activist Chemi Lhamo spoke about the reality of religious oppression in the PRC despite the promises in the Chinese constitution and Dr. Tenzin Dorjee of Tibet Action Institute explained the scope of China’s crackdown on religious practice.

Former political prisoner Namkyi told her story in the second panel. Her decision to defy Chinese authorities by walking down the street with a portrait of the Dalai Lama and the subsequent arrest and torture she endured exemplified the CCP’s extreme assault on religious freedom.

Tencho Gyatso spoke in the final panel and urged the international community to be clear, sharp, and consistent on China’s obligation to respect religious freedom. She closed her remarks by urging those present to stand together in support of freedom and justice in East Turkistan, Hong Kong, Southern Mongolia, China, and Tibet.



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