



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

During Captive Nations Week, ICT urges US Congress to pass the ‘Assuring the Future of Tibet Act’ and call for the repeal of China’s ethnic unity law

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As the US commemorates Captive Nations Week from July 19-25, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) calls on the US Congress to reaffirm the United States’s longstanding bipartisan support to the Tibetan people by passing the [‘Assuring the Future of Tibet Act’ \(AFTA\)](#). ICT also calls on the US government to publicly condemn China’s repressive [new ‘Ethnic Unity and Progress Law’ \(EUPL\)](#), a sweeping measure that seeks to institutionalize the forced assimilation of Tibetans and other non-Chinese peoples.

Captive Nations Week was established by the US Congress in 1959 and proclaimed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to recognize nations living under communist and authoritarian regimes and to reaffirm America’s support for their aspirations for freedom, self-determination, and human dignity.

Tibet was among the original captive nations recognized by Congress in July 1959 in a declaration made only months after China’s brutal suppression of the Tibetan National Uprising on March 10, 1959 and His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s escape into exile. More than six decades later, Tibet remains one of the world’s longest-running struggles, making the principles behind Captive Nations Week as relevant today as they were in 1959.

“Captive Nations Week reminds us that freedom cannot be taken for granted and calls on America to stand consistently with people who are denied their fundamental rights and act in solidarity with those who continue to defend it,” said Tencho Gyatso, President of the International Campaign for Tibet.

“For more than sixty years, Tibet has symbolized the resilience of a people determined to preserve their identity and the cost of the world’s failure to confront authoritarian repression. Passing the [‘Assuring the Future of Tibet Act’](#) would reaffirm America’s enduring support for the Tibetan people’s democratically elected leadership, while a clear condemnation of China’s ‘Ethnic Unity and Progress Law’ would send an unmistakable message to Beijing that forced assimilation has no place in the twenty-first century,” she added.

Opposing the ‘Ethnic Unity and Progress Law’

This year’s Captive Nations Week observance comes just weeks after Beijing’s new [“Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress Law” \(EUPL\)](#) came into force on July 1. The law codifies and expands China’s longstanding policies of forced assimilation targeting Tibetans, Uyghurs, Southern Mongolians, and other non-Chinese peoples. The EUPL promotes Chinese-language education and dominance, ideological conformity, restrictions on religious practice, and expanded state authority over education and culture while extending Beijing’s reach beyond its borders through provisions that raise concerns about transnational repression.

The US Congress has already demonstrated [strong bipartisan leadership in condemning this law](#) and calling for its repeal. Lawmakers have introduced bipartisan Senate legislation condemning the EUPL and warning of its impact on not just Tibetans, Uyghurs, Southern Mongolians, Hong Kongers, Taiwanese, and Chinese dissidents, but also on American citizens and organizations for actions deemed by the Chinese government to be harming “ethnic unity.” In addition, a [bipartisan group of House members recently urged US Secretary of State Marco Rubio](#) to publicly condemn the law as a tool of forced assimilation, ideological control, and transnational repression while coordinating with allies to challenge it internationally.

ICT welcomes these important Congressional measures but stresses that additional action remains urgently needed. ICT calls on the US administration to publicly condemn the EUPL, raise it in bilateral engagements with Beijing, coordinate multilateral opposition through the United Nations and like-minded governments, strengthen protections against transnational repression, and expand support for Tibetan language, religion, education, and cultural preservation.

The Assuring the Future of Tibet Act (AFTA)

This year's Captive Nations Week also provides a reminder that at a time when Beijing continues to intensify its campaign to erase Tibetan identity, bipartisan leaders in the US Congress have responded with important bipartisan initiatives that deserve swift action.

The [Assuring the Future of Tibet Act of 2026, \(H.R. 8982\)](#), introduced in the House of Representatives by Representatives James P. McGovern (D-MA) and Michael McCaul (R-TX), would empower the US government to elevate its engagement with and recognition of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) as the democratically elected representative of the Tibetan people and to ensure that US policy supporting Tibet continues beyond the lifetime of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

“At a time when Beijing has abandoned any pretense of offering autonomy for Tibetans and refuses to engage in dialogue with the Tibetan side, the United States needs to take a bold step forward in defense of freedom and democracy for the Tibetan people. This bill answers that call,” said ICT President Gyatso when AFTA was introduced.

The legislation reflects the bipartisan consensus that America's support for Tibet must continue across generations by recognizing and supporting the Tibetan people's democratic institutions, aspirations, and internationally recognized human rights.

ICT urges both chambers of Congress to advance and pass the legislation without delay and encourages lawmakers to support its Senate companion legislation.

This year's Captive Nations Week also carries profound significance as it comes just weeks after the death of Tibetan activist [Lobsang Palden, widely known as Lobga Rangzen](#), who self-immolated outside the United Nations headquarters in New York on July 2, one day after the EUPL went into effect. Lobga Rangzen's tragic passing marked the first Tibetan self-immolation on US soil.

Since 2009, there have been over [170 Tibetan self-immolations both inside Tibet and in exile](#) that reflect the extraordinary lengths to which Tibetans have gone to defend their identity, religion, language, and homeland in the face of relentless repression. Lobga's protest was accompanied by an urgent appeal to the international community not to look away.

ICT calls on the US Congress and administration to:

- Pass the **Assuring the Future of Tibet Act (H.R. 8982)** with strong bipartisan support and ensure swift enactment into law. Advance and approve the Senate companion legislation to demonstrate enduring US recognition of and engagement with the Central Tibetan Administration as the democratically elected representative of the Tibetan people.
- Publicly condemn **China's Ethnic Unity and Progress Law** as a tool of forced assimilation, cultural erasure, and transnational repression. Coordinate with democratic allies to oppose the law through bilateral diplomacy, the United Nations, and other multilateral forums, and call for its repeal.
- Strengthen US efforts to protect Tibetans and other targeted communities from transnational repression and support the preservation of Tibetan language, religion, culture, and education.



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