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San Francisco, CA 94115 USA

Sundar Pichai
Chief Executive Officer, Google
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway,
Mountain View,
CA 94043 United States

22 May 2019

Dear Mr Pichai,
cc Larry Page, Sergey Brin

We are writing to follow up on our letter to you raising our concerns about Project Dragonfly. This letter was originally sent on 22 August 2018, again on 15 November 2018 and yet again on 18 January 2019. We fail to understand why these letters have received no reply nor even been acknowledged.

The letter laid out a number of concerns that we continue to have about Project Dragonfly. Firstly, reports that Dragonfly would comply with China's repressive censorship and cybersecurity laws and automatically identify and filter 'blacklisted' websites blocked in China, as well as blocking banned search terms pertaining to human rights, Tibetan freedom, student protest, democracy and even the Dalai Lama. Secondly, in order to operate in China, Google would also be required to comply with the Chinese government's 2017 Cyber Security Law, which stipulates that Internet companies must "store their data on Chinese-law regulated local servers, and cooperate with Chinese national security agencies if asked to". When paired with China's loosely worded state security legislation, this requirement creates the risk that Internet users in China could face arrest and detention as a result of their Internet activity.

It must be re-emphasised that in the recent past, Google has demonstrated that it was aware of, and concerned by, the dangers that the Chinese government's interference and censorship posed to a free and open Internet. Google reiterated its commitment to freedom and openness in 2010 when it withdrew from China, stating "we don't want to engage in political censorship", and adding that government restrictions "not only strike at the heart of an open Internet but also violate Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

Since Google's withdrawal, the human rights situation in China has markedly deteriorated. For Google to return at this time would be to legitimise the ongoing repression, in particular the tightening government control over the Internet, exemplified by the Cyber Security Law of the People's Republic of China.

We acknowledge news reports that work on Dragonfly was “effectively ended” in late 2018, a position that you reiterated to the House Judiciary Committee in December 2018 in saying that Google currently has no plans *right now* [1] to develop a search engine for China. That a return to Dragonfly could not be ruled out in future was also repeated in a recent BBC interview [2] by Eric Schmidt, and we recognise that there have been statements from staff inside Google, who maintain that work on a Chinese search engine remains ongoing. Therefore, in addition to the concerns raised in previous letters, we would also welcome clarification on the status of Project Dragonfly and the rationale and basis on which the project - or others like it - would be continued given the Government of China’s current cybersecurity laws, mass cyber-surveillance and human rights abuses.

We understand from civil society sector colleagues that you have met or responded to concerns that they have raised, albeit still failing to address the serious concerns of wide ranging human rights groups over Project Dragonfly. However, with this in mind we would greatly appreciate a response to our earlier correspondence with you (see attached) and would like to highlight the fact that our letter(s) come not only from human rights professionals but also from Tibetans, Uyghurs and Chinese rights activists who represent those directly affected by the implementation of Project Dragonfly. Based on the risks they and their families face, we strongly urge that we receive a response from you and reiterate our request for a meeting with you and/or other Google representatives to discuss the concerns raised in our communications to you.

We urge you to respond and remain open to a constructive dialogue with you.

Yours sincerely,



Alison Reynolds, Executive Director, International Tibet Network - alison@tibetnetwork.org

on behalf of

John Jones, Campaigner, Free Tibet - www.FreeTibet.org

Sondhya Gupta, Campaigner, SumOfUs - www.sumofus.org/

Lhadon Tethong, Executive Director, Tibet Action Institute - <https://tibetaction.net/>

Dorjee Tseten, Executive Director, Students for a Free Tibet - <https://studentsforafreetibet.org/>

Bhuchung Tsering, Vice President, International Campaign for Tibet, <https://www.savetibet.org/>

Rushan Abbas, Director, Campaign for Uyghurs - <https://campaignforuyghurs.org/>

Dolkun Isa, President, World Uyghur Congress - <https://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/>

Teng Biao, Chinese academic lawyer and a human rights activist

Shao Jiang, Chinese academic and student leader during Tiananmen Square protests of 1989

NOTES:

- [1] <https://www.techspot.com/news/77813-google-ceo-evasive-when-asked-about-dragonfly-congress.html>
- [2] <https://theintercept.com/2019/05/14/google-search-china-eric-schmidt-comments/>