



International Tibet Network Secretariat
1310 Fillmore Street, #401, San Francisco, CA 94115

8 October 2020

To: The Member States of the UN General Assembly

We the undersigned 115 global Tibet related groups¹ - all committed to promoting and protecting the human rights of those living under Chinese rule - urge you to vote against China's election bid for a seat on the UN Human Rights Council.

Members of the Human Rights Council are expected to maintain the highest standards of human rights and to cooperate with the Council. UN General Assembly Resolution 60/251², which created the Human Rights Council, urges UN Member States voting for prospective Council members to "take into account the contribution of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights." This applies to candidates' efforts to promote and protect human rights in their own countries and abroad. Members of the Human Rights Council are also required to "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights" and to "fully cooperate with the Council." China falls short on all counts.

The catalogue of evidence of China's brutal assault on human rights in Tibet, East Turkestan, Hong Kong and Southern Mongolia, coupled with abject further failures to cooperate with the United Nations, and systematic efforts to undermine freedoms globally, make it utterly untenable for UN Member States to support China's election bid. Under President Xi Jinping, Tibet has become the second least free country in the world after only Syria.³ During the past decade, the Chinese government has unleashed a harsh crackdown on civil society, especially in Tibet. In July 2015, these policies resulted in the death in custody of prominent Tibetan buddhist leader, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, who had been persecuted and incarcerated for life on trumped up and politically motivated charges.⁴

The human rights situation for those living under Chinese rule has become so severe that 51 UN experts issued an unprecedented statement calling for a Special Session to be held on China and highlighting the urgent need to establish a UN mechanism to monitor and investigate the widespread human rights violations perpetrated by the Chinese government.⁵ Since the start of 2020 alone, over half a million Tibetans have been coerced into militarised

¹ The International Tibet Network is a coalition of more than 100 Tibet organisations dedicated to campaigning to end human rights violations in Tibet and restoring rights to the Tibetan people. www.tibetnetwork.org

² UN General Assembly, *Human Rights Council : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly*, 3 April 2006, A/RES/60/251, https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/60/251&Lang=E

³ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World, Countries and Territories*: <https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores>

⁴ The International Tibet Network, 'Tenzin Delek Rinpoche: Death in a Chinese Prison' 13 July 2015:

<https://tibetnetwork.org/tenzin-delek-rinpoche-death-in-a-chinese-prison/>

⁵ OHCHR, *UN experts call for decisive measures to protect fundamental freedoms in China*, 26 June 2020:

[https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26006#:~:text=OHCHR%20%7C%20UN%20expert%20call%20for%20protect%20fundamental%20freedoms%20in%20China&text=GENEVA%20\(26%20June%202020\)%20%E2%80%93%20fundamental%20freedoms%20in%20China](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26006#:~:text=OHCHR%20%7C%20UN%20expert%20call%20for%20protect%20fundamental%20freedoms%20in%20China&text=GENEVA%20(26%20June%202020)%20%E2%80%93%20fundamental%20freedoms%20in%20China)

labour facilities in Tibet, where they are subjected to indoctrination, ideological training, intrusive surveillance and mass relocation.⁶

At the United Nations, the Chinese government's record is equally dire. China has consistently failed to cooperate with the Council, including by granting access to Special Procedures to visit the country. In the last two decades between 1997 and 2020, China permitted only eight mandate holders to visit the country.⁷ The last UN expert to visit Tibet was the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 2005. During the most recent visit of a UN expert to China which took place from 25 November to 3 December 2019, Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, the UN Independent Expert on the Human Rights of Older Persons, was again unable to visit Tibet. To date, there are at least 19 outstanding visit requests to China by Special Procedures⁸ while the last UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Tibet was Mary Robinson in 1998.

Individuals and groups, including Tibetans, who have cooperated with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms have been subject to reprisals and intimidation by the Chinese government.⁹ China has consistently been cited in the Secretary General's reports on 'Alleged Reprisals for Cooperation with the United Nations, its Representatives and Mechanisms in the Field of Human Rights'.¹⁰

China has also consistently voted against country-specific resolutions under item 2 which are geared towards addressing the urgent human rights situation in countries such as North Korea, Syria, Yemen and Iran and has used the Human Rights Council to table resolutions undermining human rights, emphasising national sovereignty, and calling for quiet dialogue

⁶ Jamestown Foundation, Xinjiang's System of Militarized Vocational Training Comes to Tibet, 22 September 2020:

<https://jamestown.org/program/jamestown-early-warning-brief-xinjiangs-system-of-militarized-vocational-training-comes-to-tibet/>

⁷ UN Commission on Human Rights, *Report of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. Mission to China*, 29 December 2004, E/CN.4/2005/6/Add.4, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/42d66e570.html>; UN Commission on Human Rights, "Report submitted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Addendum: Visit to the People's Republic of China," E/CN.4/1998/44/Add.2, December 22, 1997; UN Commission on Human Rights, *Report on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment: Mission to China*, 10 March 2006, E/CN.4/2006/6/Add.6, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/45377b160.html>; UN Commission on Human Rights, The right to education: Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur, Katarina Tomaževski: Addendum Mission to China, 21 November 2003, E/CN.4/2004/45/Add.1, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4090ffdc0.html>; UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter - Addendum - Mission to China, 20 January 2012, A/HRC/19/59/Add.1, available at: https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/19/59/Add.1; UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice - Mission to China, 12 June 2014, A/HRC/26/39/Add.2, available at: https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/26/39/Add.2; UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights on his mission to China, 1 March 2016, A/HRC/31/60/Add.1, available at: https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/31/60/Add.1; UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his mission to China*, 28 March 2017, A/HRC/35/26/Add.2, available at: https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/35/26/Add.2; UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation of older persons on her visit to China, 7 August 2020, A/HRC/45/14/Add.1, available at: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/45/14/Add.1>

⁸ OHCHR, View Country visits of Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council since 1998, China, available at: <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewCountryVisits.aspx?visitType=all&country=CHN&Lang=en>

⁹ Human Rights Watch, 'The Costs of International Advocacy: China's Interference in United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms' 5 September 2017:

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/09/05/costs-international-advocacy/chinas-interference-united-nations-human-rights>

¹⁰ Reporting mandate of the Secretary-General on intimidation and reprisals for cooperation with the UN in the field of human rights, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Reprisals/Pages/Reporting.aspx>

and cooperation rather than investigations and international calls to action, most notably in 2017¹¹ and 2018¹² and 2020.¹³

The upcoming Human Rights Council election on 13 October 2020 presents UN Member States with a crucial opportunity to send a clear message to the Chinese authorities, that their total disregard for international law will not be tolerated. Granting China a seat at the Council will undercut the Council's credibility, its other achievements and will send a dangerous signal that the Human Rights Council is not fit for the purpose it was created.

We are also concerned by the lack of competitive elections we are once again witnessing at the Council and call on your government to commit itself publicly to support a competitive, genuinely-contested and principled electoral process for Human Rights Council elections.

In the interest of safeguarding the integrity of the Human Rights Council and fulfilling the vision of its creators, we urge your delegation to the UN General Assembly to apply the membership criteria of its own resolution when casting their secret ballots on 13 October 2020. China clearly falls far short of those standards.

Thank you for your leadership on these issues.

SIGNED by Tibet Advocacy Coalition and the following 115 Member Groups of the International Tibet Network:

Asia: Anterrashtriya Bharat – Tibbet Sahyog Samiti Bharrat Tibbat Sahyog Manch, India Circle of Friends (Philippines) Core Group for Tibetan Cause, India Dream for Children, Japan Foundation for Universal Responsibility of H. H. the Dalai Lama Human Rights Network for Tibet and Taiwan India Tibet Friendship Society Japan Association of Monks for Tibet (Super Sangha) National Campaign for Tibetan Support, India National Democratic Party of Tibet Roof of the World Foundation, Indonesia Students for a Free Tibet Japan Students for a Free Tibet India Taiwan Friends of Tibet The Youth Liberation Front of Tibet, Mongolia and Turkestan Tibet Lives, India Tibet Support Group Kiku, Japan	Western Europe: Aide aux Refugies Tibetains Association Drôme Ardèche-Tibet Associazione Italia-Tibet Briancon05 Urgence Tibet Casa del Tibet – Spain Comite de Apoyo al Tibet (CAT) EcoTibet Ireland France-Tibet Free Tibet Grupo de Apoio ao Tibete, Portugal International Society of Human Rights, Munich Chapter (IGFM) Les Amis du Tibet – Belgium Les Amis du Tibet Luxembourg Lions Des Neiges Mont Blanc, France Maison des Himalayas Maison du Tibet – Tibet Info Objectif Tibet Passeport Tibetain Phagma Drolma-Arya Tara Save Tibet, Austria
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¹¹ U.N. General Assembly, Resolution 35/L.33, The contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights, A/HRC/35/L.33/Rev. 1 (June 20, 2017), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G17/170/16/PDF/G1717016.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹² U.N. General Assembly, Resolution 37/L.36, Promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights, A/HRC/37/L.36 (March 19, 2018), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G18/066/67/PDF/G1806667.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹³ U.N. General Assembly, Resolution 43/L.31, Promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights, A/HRC/43/L.31 (June 2020), https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/43/L.31/Rev.1.

Tibetan Women's Association (Central)

North America:

Association Cognizance Tibet, North Carolina
Bay Area Friends of Tibet
Boston Tibet Network
Canada Tibet Committee
Committee of 100 for Tibet
International Tibet Independence Movement
Santa Barbara Friends of Tibet
Sierra Friends of Tibet
Students for a Free Tibet
Students for a Free Tibet – Canada
Tibet Action Institute
Tibet Committee of Fairbanks
Tibet Justice Center
Tibetan Association of Ithaca
Tibetan Association of Northern California
Tibetan Association of Philadelphia
Tibetan Cultural Association – Quebec
Tibetans of Mixed Heritage
TIBETmichigan
U.S. Tibet Committee
United Nations for a Free Tibet (UNFFT)

Latin America:

Amigos de Tibet, Colombia
Amigos del Tibet, Chile
Amigos del Tibet, El Salvador
Asociación Cultural Peruano Tibetana
Asociación Cultural Tibetano Costarricense
Casa Tibet México
Centro De Cultura Tibetana, Brazil
Friends of Tibet in Costa Rica
Le Club Français, Paraguay
RangZen: Movimento Tibete Livre, Brazil
Tibet Mx
Tibet Group, Panama
Tíbet Patria Libre, Uruguay
World League for Freedom and Democracy

Africa and Middle East:

Israeli Friends of the Tibetan People
Tibet Support Group Kenya
Tibet Society of South Africa
Tibet Rescue Initiative in Africa

Society for Threatened Peoples International
Students for a Free Tibet – France
Students for a Free Tibet – UK
Swiss Tibetan Friendship Association (GSTF)
Tashi Delek Bordeaux
Tibet Initiative Deutschland
Tibet Society, U.K.
Tibet Support Group – Netherlands
Tibetan Association of Germany
Tibetan Community Austria
Tibetan Community in Britain
Tibetan Community in Ireland
Tibetan Youth Association in Europe
Tibetan Community of Italy
Tibetisches Zentrum Hamburg
Lungta Association Belgium

Northern Europe

Friends of Tibet in Finland
Swedish Tibet Committee
The Norwegian Tibet Committee
Tibet Support Committee Denmark
Tibetan Community in Denmark
Tibetan Community Sweden
Students for a Free Tibet Denmark

Central & Eastern Europe

Czechs Support Tibet
Save Tibet Foundation
Tibet cesky (Tibet in Czech)
Tibetan Programme of The Other Space
Foundation
TSG – Slovenia

Australasia:

Australia Tibet Council
Friends of Tibet New Zealand
Sakya Trinley Ling
Tibet Action Group of Western Australia
Tibet Support Group Adelaide – Australia
Tibetan Community of Victoria
Tibetan Community, Queensland