

## NEW EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION SAYS CHINA'S CRIMINAL LAW IS BEING ABUSED TO PERSECUTE TIBETANS AND BUDDHISTS

IN A RESOLUTION ADOPTED ON 18 APRIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HAS SINGLED OUT CHINA FOR ITS PERSECUTION OF TIBETANS AND OTHER ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND DEMANDED THAT THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES RESPECT THEIR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS.



The resolution, adopted with a large 505-vote majority, expresses the European Parliament's concerns about the increasing repression faced by many ethnic and religious so-called "minorities" in China, in particular Tibetans, Uyghurs, Kazakhs and Christians. Among issues raised, it calls on China to close the so-called "political

reeducation camps" in Xinjiang (known to Uyghurs as East Turkestan) and to "uphold the linguistic, cultural, religious and other fundamental freedoms of Tibetans."

On Tibet more specifically, the resolution expresses concern that "China's criminal law is being abused to persecute Tibetans

and Buddhists, whose religious activities are equated with 'separatism.'" It condemns China's "patriotic education" campaigns, including interferences in the management of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, and asks the Chinese authorities to refrain from forcing Tibetan nomads to abandon their traditional

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lifestyle. European Parliamentarians also urged China to immediately release Tibetans detained solely for having exercised their right to freedom of expression and reiterated their call for unhindered access to Tibet for EU citizens.

During the debate, many members of the European Parliament highlighted the importance of standing up to China's gross human rights violations. EU High Representative Federica Mogherini also presented the European Union's efforts to bring positive change for Tibetans, Uyghurs and other groups, stressing the importance of coherency and unity of EU institutions, but also of European Union Member States

on this issue. She also expressed – for the first time publicly - the EU's call for China "to allow reciprocal access to Tibet for European journalists, diplomats, and families" – an appeal inspired by the adoption of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act in the US last year. These views were recently [echoed](#) by a number of concerned parliamentarians across Europe as well as in several recent resolutions of the European Parliament.

This resolution on China was the last of this Parliament -the next Members of the European Parliament were elected at the end of May.

[Click here](#) to read the full text of the European Parliament Resolution on China, notably the

*situation of religious and ethnic minorities.*



*Click on the picture to read High Representative Federica Mogherini's full remarks during the debate in the European Parliament. (Photo: Screenshot of European Parliament Web TV)*

## THE EU AND CHINA HOLD THEIR ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE AND SUMMIT

EARLY APRIL WAS A BUSY TIME FOR EU-CHINA RELATIONS, AS THE EU AND CHINA HELD THE ANNUAL ROUND OF THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE IN BRUSSELS – FOLLOWED A FEW DAYS LATER BY THE 21<sup>ST</sup> EU-CHINA SUMMIT.

Ahead of these important meetings, several human rights organizations, including ICT, had written to EU leaders, urging them to prioritize human rights issues with their Chinese interlocutors. ICT also shared its concerns about the alarming situation in Tibet with the EU, including the cases of several detained human rights defenders. At the dialogue on 1-2 April in Brussels, the European Union insisted on the universality of human rights and highlighted the deteriorating situation of civil and political rights in China; it also raised a number of individual cases, including those of Tashi Wangchuk and Lobsang Dargye. However, the replies given by the Chinese delegation, and the fact that it declined to participate in an



EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang and European Council President Donald Tusk at the 21<sup>st</sup> EU-China Summit in Brussels on 9 April. (Photo: European Union)

exchange of views with civil society organized as part of the dialogue, showed once again the unwillingness of China to genuinely engage in the

process and make concrete progress on human rights.

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Uyghur and Tibetan participants to the protest on the margins of the EU-China Summit. (Photo: ICT)

On the day of the Summit - 9 April - ICT therefore jointly organized a protest with

other NGOs in front of the EU headquarters in Brussels, just a few meters away from the Summit site, to press the EU to raise human rights issues with Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang and urge for action at the highest level given the gravity of the situation. Around 200 people participated, including many members of the Tibetan and Uyghur communities in Belgium, who called in particular for the respect of Tibetans' freedom of religion as well as the closure of 'political reeducation' camps in Xinjiang. Unfortunately, although

European Council President Donald Tusk briefly stated in his remarks after the meeting that human rights had not been forgotten and that he had raised "a number of individual cases" with Li, no specific issue or call for concrete improvement in the situation was made publicly, raising questions regarding the EU's commitment of putting its economic interests on the same level as human rights.

**MORE ON THIS:**

- [Joint NGO letter ahead of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue and Summit](#)
- [EEAS Press Release on the 37th EU-China Human Rights Dialogue](#)
- [Joint Statement of the 21st EU-China Summit](#)

## 7<sup>TH</sup> WORLD PARLIAMENTARY CONVENTION ON TIBET HELD IN RIGA

**BETWEEN 7 - 10 MAY, PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM AROUND THE WORLD GATHERED IN THE LATVIAN CAPITAL OF RIGA FOR THE 7<sup>TH</sup> WORLD PARLIAMENTARY CONVENTION ON TIBET.**

The convention was organized by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, in close association with the Latvian Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet and the International Network of Parliamentarians on Tibet. It was attended by around 100 participants, including Members of Parliament from Asia, Europe, the Americas and Oceania, as well as the President of the Tibetan government in exile Lobsang Sangay and Tibet experts. Ahead of the meeting, several parliamentarians were pressured by the Chinese government not to attend the meeting.

The event, aimed at discussing and coordinating international support for the Tibetan cause, consisted of a number of panel discussions on topics such as 'China-Tibet History', 'the environmental situation in Tibet' and 'framing the Tibetan issue in the context of International law and relations.' ICT also participated, and its EU Policy Director Vincent Metten briefed participants



One of the discussion panels at the WPCT. (Photo: ICT)

on the current state of the European Union's policy on Tibet.

At the conclusion of the convention, parliamentarians adopted the Riga declaration, which calls on China to give unimpeded access to Tibet to foreign citizens and resume the dialogue with representatives of the Dalai Lama.

The WPCT in Riga followed six previous conventions that took place in New Delhi (1994), Vilnius (1995), Washington DC (1997), Edinburgh (2005), Rome (2009) and Ottawa (2012).

**MORE ON THIS:**

- [Riga Declaration on Tibet](#)
- [ICT's presentation on EU policies on Tibet](#)

## CREATION OF FAKE “TIBETAN ASSOCIATION” UNVEILED IN CANADA

THE CREATION LAST MONTH IN TORONTO OF A SO-CALLED “TIBETAN ASSOCIATION OF CANADA” THAT TURNED OUT TO BE LINKED WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT IS THE LATEST EXAMPLE OF CHINA’S EFFORTS TO MISLEAD THE WORLD ON TIBET.



A press conference announcing the foundation of a Chinese front group calling itself the Tibetan Association of Canada.

Due to the nature of its inaugural event, featuring the involvement of pro-Chinese Communist Party organizations - like the Confederation of Toronto Chinese Canadian Organizations, publicly known in Canada to be an entity working closely with the Chinese government - and a small number of Tibetans, it was clear that this association is a Chinese government front group. The Tibetans present, who formed a minority of the audience at the gala despite the sizeable Tibetan community in Toronto, were all individuals publicly known to be involved with China’s United Front Work Department (UFWD), as well as Chinese consulates in New York and Canada. More tellingly, the Chinese national anthem and a Chinese Communist-inspired song that refers to Tibetans and Chinese as “members of one family” were played at the event, making the political agenda of the organization clear.

A report in a Chinese-language news website about the event claimed that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Federal Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Minister Ahmed Hussen “sent a special congratulatory letter for the

establishment of the “Canada Tibetan Compatriots Association,” and copies of the messages were shared on social media. The Canadian Prime Minister’s office has however [denied providing such a message](#).

Six legitimate Tibetan Canadian organizations in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia [released a joint letter](#) on 23 April, saying this China-supported association does not represent Tibetan Canadians. The Canada Tibet Committee also said that the aim of setting up such an association “seems to be to divide the Tibetan community in Canada.”

Chinese tactics meant to influence foreign countries from within and disrupt Tibetan communities in exile already stirred attention in April 2018, when Swedish authorities charged a Tibetan resident with spying for the Chinese government. These acts of espionage have gained attention in some countries, including in the United States where a bicameral and bipartisan legislation known as “Countering the Chinese Government and Communist Party’s Political Influence Operations Act” has been introduced in Congress.

## TIBETAN MAN SENTENCED TO FOUR YEARS IN PRISON AFTER CALLING FOR THE PANCHEN LAMA’S FREEDOM

AS TIBET’S SECOND BEST-KNOWN RELIGIOUS FIGURE THE PANCHEN LAMA TURNED 30 LAST APRIL, CHINESE AUTHORITIES IN THE SICHUAN PROVINCE HAVE JAILED A YOUNG TIBETAN WHO CALLED FOR HIS RELEASE.



The only known photo of Gendun Choekyi Nyima was taken when he was a child, but on the occasion of his birthday, British facial aging specialist Tim Widden has attempted to create an image of how he would look like today.

In the first known incident linked to the Panchen Lama for many years, Wangchen, a 20-year-old Tibetan man, was arrested on 29 April in Sershul, in Eastern Tibet, after he publicly called for the release of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima - the 11<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama of Tibet who disappeared more than 20 years ago - and called for the reunification of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama in Tibet.

According to a report from Radio Free Asia (RFA), he was shortly after sentenced by the Sershul County People’s Court in Sichuan’s Kardze (in Chinese, Ganzi) prefecture to four

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## MILLIONS OF CHINESE STUDENTS TO BE SENT TO “MINORITY AREAS” TO “SPREAD CIVILIZATION”

IN A MOVE REMINISCENT OF CHINA'S DISASTROUS CULTURAL REVOLUTION, MILLIONS OF CHINESE YOUTH VOLUNTEERS WILL BE SENT TO RURAL AREAS ACROSS CHINA, INCLUDING “ETHNIC MINORITY AREAS,” TO “SPREAD CIVILIZATION.”



China's Communist Youth League members. (Photo: Twitter @XHNews)

In a document released on 22 March and made public by Chinese state media and international news agencies, the Chinese Communist Youth League announced it was sending more than 10 million vocational school and university students to rural areas as volunteers by 2022 in order to “increase their skills, spread civilization and promote science and technology.”

For many, this deployment of students to “spread civilization” evokes the excesses and chaos of the Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976 when millions of Chinese intellectuals and others were exiled to the countryside. According to an AFP report, which monitored reaction

to the campaign on China's Twitter-like Weibo social media platform, a user, WangTingYu, posted “*Has it started again?*,” while another user with a Tibetan-sounding name, KalsangWangduTB, posted: “*Sometimes history advances, sometimes it retreats.*”

Assuming that the students will also be sent to Tibetan areas, this would mean a further step in the intensification of Communist Party presence in Tibetan areas since a crackdown on peaceful protests by Tibetans in 2008. This intensification has included the deployment of thousands of Party cadres working at all levels of society in private homes, monasteries and schools.

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and a half years in prison, on charges of “leading a conspicuous protest in public against the law of the land.” The Court also sentenced Wangchen's aunt, Acha Dolkar, to one year and three months in



Tibetan protester Wangchen and his aunt Acha Dolkar in an undated photo obtained by RFA.

jail; Chinese authorities apparently accuse her of spreading news of Wangchen's protest to contacts outside the region. Two other Tibetans, Lobsang and Yonten, were moreover detained as accomplices and fined 15,000 yuan (around €2,000) and to six months of “political re-education”. During the trial, which the defendants endured without proper legal assistance, Wangchen's unsteady gait raised fears that he was subjected to torture or ill-treatment in custody; however, this cannot be confirmed at the moment, as Chinese authorities have not allowed anyone to approach Wangchen.

On 25 April it was Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. Some 24 years ago, just a few days after the Dalai Lama recognized him as the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, Chinese authorities abducted him and his family, making him the world's youngest political prisoner. His whereabouts remain unknown, and he has not been seen in public since his kidnapping, although it is believed he is still alive.



Pema Wangchen, 31, was arrested in April 2016 - a few weeks after he sang [in public the Tibetan national anthem](#) in his native village of Wongsang in Karze county- and was subsequently severely tortured for over

## POLITICAL PRISONER FOCUS

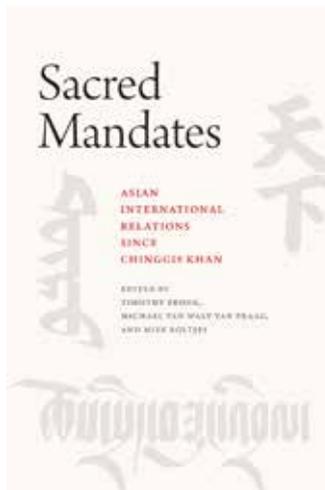
### DEATH OF FORMER POLITICAL PRISONER PEMA WANGCHEN

ACCORDING TO A [REPORT](#) BY RADIO FREE ASIA (RFA) CITING TIBETAN SOURCES, PEMA WANGCHEN, A TIBETAN SINGER AND FORMER POLITICAL PRISONER, DIED IN CHINA'S SICHUAN PROVINCE ON 26 APRIL, PROBABLY AS A RESULT OF THE UNTREATED LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF THE TORTURE HE WAS SUBJECTED TO IN CHINESE CUSTODY.

a month in prison, the report said. He was finally released in poor health in May 2016, and tried in vain to get treatment for his health condition. In mid-April this year, Wangchen's health deteriorated dramatically; *"He had severe back pain, and his body became so swollen that he could not even put on his shoes,"* RFA's source said. He was admitted to a hospital in Sichuan's provincial capital

Chengdu, but died on 26 April.

His death is the second torture-related death of a former Tibetan political prisoner reported this month, following the [passing away of Lekshey Thupten](#) at the beginning of the month due to health issues. He had also been subjected to inhuman treatment and torture while in prison.



## READING SUGGESTION

### SACRED MANDATES

ASIAN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SINCE CHINGGIS KHAN, EDITED BY TIMOTHY BROOK, MICHAEL VAN WALT VAN PRAAG, MIEK BOLTJES

Editor: The University of Chicago Press

Publication date: May 2018

Click [here](#) to buy this book.

Contemporary discussions of international relations in Asia tend to be tethered in the present, unmoored from the historical contexts that give them meaning. *Sacred Mandates*, edited by Timothy Brook, Michael van Walt van Praag, and Miek Boltjes, redresses this oversight by examining the complex history of inter-polity relations in Inner and East Asia from the 13<sup>th</sup> century through to the 20<sup>th</sup>, in order

to help us understand and develop policies to address challenges in the region today. This book argues that understanding the diversity of past legal orders helps explain the forms of contemporary conflict, as well as the conflicting historical narratives that animate tensions. Rather than proceed sequentially by way of dynasties, the editors identify three "worlds" — Chinggisid Mongol, Tibetan Buddhist, and Confucian Sinic — that represent different forms of civilization authority and legal order. This novel framework enables us to escape the modern tendency to view the international system solely as the interaction of independent states, and instead detect the

effects of the complicated history at play between and within regions. Contributors from a wide range of disciplines cover a host of topics: the development of international law, sovereignty, state formation, ruler legitimacy, and imperial expansion, as well as the role of spiritual authority on state behavior, the impact of modernization, and the challenges for peace processes. The culmination of five years of collaborative research, *Sacred Mandates* is likely to be the definitive historical guide to international and intrastate relations in Asia, of interest to policymakers and scholars alike, for years to come.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **14-16 JUNE**

19<sup>th</sup> Tibetan and Himalayan peoples Festival in Paris, France  
(more information at <https://www.festivalcultureldutibet.com/>)

- **24 JUNE – 12 JULY**

41<sup>st</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council

- **1 JULY**

Start of the Finnish EU Presidency

- **16-18 JULY**

2<sup>nd</sup> US Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom in Washington, USA