



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-01868**

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DATE: **NOVEMBER 21, 2017**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **SIGNED BY THE HONOURABLE CHRYSIA FREELAND**

Response by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

China

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The promotion and protection of human rights is an integral part of Canadian foreign policy and a long-standing priority in our relationship with China.

Canada has consistently called on China to respect, protect and promote the freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of assembly and association, and freedom of religion or belief of all Chinese citizens, including Tibetans.

Specifically, the Government of Canada continues to closely monitor the human rights situation in Tibet. As was done during the high level visits in 2016, the Prime Minister raised human rights concerns during his second official visit to China (December 4 to 7, 2017). Canada will continue to have frank discussions with China on respect for human rights and the rule of law, including in relation to religious freedom and the situation in Tibet. Canada has also consistently advocated for substantive and meaningful dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives to work toward a resolution of issues acceptable to both sides.

In addition to bilateral and multilateral interventions, Canada has created a list of human rights cases of particular concern similar in content to the Canadian Coalition on Human Rights in China list of “*Prisoners of Conscience*”. The list is a small sample of high profile cases and currently includes two Tibetans.

Canada raised the cases of two Tibetans – Mr. Tashi Wangchuk and Mr. Druklo on November 28, 2017 with Mr. Danzenglangjie, Deputy, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the People’s Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region and officials from the National People’s Congress of China. Canada reiterated that Mr. Wangchuk and Mr. Druklo’s rights to express their opinion should be protected and they should not be detained for doing so.

At the same meeting on November 28, 2017, Canada also raised the case of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama; called for the unconditional release of the Panchen Lama and his family, and for a Canadian delegation to be able to visit them. Canada first raised the case of the Panchen Lama with Chinese authorities in 1995. In 1998, the Canadian Embassy in Beijing delivered to Chinese counterparts 1,000 birthday cards for the Panchen Lama from Canadian children. Over the years, Canada has requested that China provide information on the location of the Panchen Lama and his parents, the level of education that he has completed and the expected date for his return along with his parents. Canada has called on China to allow the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief to visit him.

Canada will continue to call on China to respect the human rights of its citizens and to advocate for the release of Chinese citizens detained or imprisoned for exercising their human rights. Canada will continue to closely monitor the cases of Tibetan human rights defenders who have been detained. This includes seeking trial attendance where possible.