

Minister
of Foreign Affairs



Ministre
des Affaires étrangères

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G2

March 30, 2023

Mr. Ken Hardie
Chair
House of Commons Special Committee
on the Canada-People's Republic of China Relationship
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Hardie:

On behalf of the Government of Canada, we would like to thank the House of Commons Special Committee on the Canada – People's Republic of China Relations (CACN) for its report entitled, "*Canada – People's Republic of China Relations*," which refers to the harsh crackdown by the Government of China on widespread protests against China's Zero-COVID policies in November 2022 and raises concerns with regard to the human rights of protestors, notably the right of peaceful assembly. The Government is pleased to receive the committee's report and would like to thank all members for their time and effort.

In response to the protests, on November 29, 2022, Prime Minister Trudeau made the following statement on the right of peaceful assembly: "Canadians are watching very closely. Obviously, everyone in China should be allowed to express themselves, should be allowed to share their perspectives and indeed, protest. We are going to continue to ensure that China knows that we'll stand up for human rights, we'll stand with people who are expressing themselves."

As reiterated in the Government's recent announcement of its *Indo-Pacific Strategy*, the promotion of human rights is an integral part of Canadian foreign policy and a long-standing priority in our relationship with China. It is in this context that the Government has made clear its support for the freedom of peaceful assembly everywhere, including in China. Canada is committed to advancing these issues in exchanges with China, including through high-level bilateral and multilateral engagements, public statements, advocacy, diplomatic dialogue, and close coordination with likeminded countries.

Canada has consistently called on China to respect, protect, and promote human rights and freedoms for everyone in China, including freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and freedom of religion or belief. Canadian officials continue to discuss human rights issues

.../2

in direct bilateral conversations with Chinese counterparts. We call on the Government of China to respect its own constitution and its international obligations.

The Government of Canada continues to closely monitor the human rights situation in China and will continue to call on China to respect the human rights of all individuals within its territory and advocate for the release of individuals in China who have been detained or imprisoned for exercising their human rights.

Once again, on behalf of the Government of Canada, we would like to thank the members of the Special Committee on the Canada-People's Republic of China Relationship for the diligence and commitment demonstrated in its work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Joly', is positioned above the typed name.

The Honourable Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs