



MEDIA RELEASE

18 March 2024

“Our human rights are not for sale” Communities remind Penny Wong ahead of Chinese Foreign Minister’s visit to Canberra

Protestors from across Australia will rally at Parliament House during Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s visit to Canberra on 20 March, as China promises to lift more coercive trade bans on Australian exports.

Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hong Kongers, Chinese democracy activists and human rights defenders will send a strong message to China and the Australian Government: Human Rights are Not for Sale.

“The Labor Government must not repeat past mistakes of sacrificing human rights at the altar of trade,” said Mr Choezin, president of Australia’s Tibetan community associations.

“The relationship must not return to “business as usual” just because China is ready to trade again” he added.

“The Australian Government cannot overlook that China is an authoritarian state and cannot ignore its continuing human rights atrocities against Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hong Kongers, Chinese activists and detained Australian citizens.” said Dr Zoe Bedford, Executive Officer of Australia Tibet Council.

“It is disappointing that, while Tibet has been [consistently ranked](#) among the least free countries in the world, the Australian Government is rewarding the Chinese Government with trade deals rather than issuing Magnitsky sanctions for their human rights abuses”, Dr Bedford added.

“We are asking the Australian Government to put human rights above trade and hold the Chinese leadership to account for its atrocities in Tibet.”

Background

China’s military occupation of Tibet since 1950 is at a critical stage as nearly one million children, roughly 80 percent of the children’s population in Tibet, are forcibly removed from their families and culture into a vast network of Chinese colonial boarding schools.

Over the past year, [multiple UN human rights experts](#) have found the colonial school system for Tibetan children contrary to international human rights standards.

Tibet has been consistently ranked one of the least places in the world by the independent think tank, Freedom House ([Freedom in the World Report](#), 2024).

Up to 70% of Australians want to see stronger accountability on human rights according to last year’s [Essential Media poll](#).

In February Chinese Authorities shut down peaceful protest by mass arresting over 1,000 Tibetans from Derge county. The Tibetan protestors, including Buddhist monks, were trying to save their homes and centuries-old monasteries from being destroyed by yet another Chinese Hydro-power dam project. [Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIMgJ38mBHc>]

Rally details

9:00 AM to 1:00 PM Wednesday 20 March 2024
Parliament House lawns, Canberra

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Australia Tibet Council campaigns for the freedom and human rights of Tibetans. We are a not-for-profit organisation, funded by members across Australia.

In the spirit of reconciliation, Australia Tibet Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

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