

**INTERNATIONAL
CAMPAIGN
FOR TIBET**

fidh



**Liga
voor de
Rechten
van de
Mens**

Amsterdam, 14 March 2014

Dear Prime Minister Rutte,

As the Chinese President Xi Jinping embarks on his first official visit to Europe this March, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the League for Human Rights Netherlands (LvRM) write to urge you to place human rights at the core of your talks.

Our organisations greatly appreciate the fact that the EU discussed human rights issues with the Chinese authorities during the EU-China Summit held in November 2013. However, we reiterate the need for these discussions to be result-oriented.

In that regard, we need to deplore the fact that the significant economic growth that has taken place in China over the last few years has not been matched by any meaningful progress in the fields of the rule of law, fight against corruption, respect for human rights and democracy as well as the environment.

It is our organisations' view that human rights conditions have deteriorated rather than improved in recent years. Xi Jinping's Presidency has so far failed to meet hopes for change in China. We have witnessed a further decline in freedom of expression, assembly and association. Moreover, human rights defenders and activists are often arbitrarily arrested, detained and subjected to enforced disappearance. Pervasive Internet and media controls remain in place. The rights of Tibetans and Uyghurs, including the enjoyment of their culture, have been further curtailed in the wake of protests in those regions and the government continues to strictly control the parameters of religious practice. Recently undertaken steps such as the abolition of re-education through labour (RTL) appear to be rather cosmetic, as authorities are resorting to other means of repression instead, and the party rhetoric has been backslashing on human rights, democracy and rule of law.

In the 25th anniversary year of the Tiananmen Square massacre and of the imposition of martial law in Lhasa, the Chinese government's violent crackdown and

militarization in Tibet and in Xinjiang suggest that there has been no fundamental change in the way the authorities respond to peaceful protests and demands for reform by citizens.

Your upcoming meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping represents an excellent and timely opportunity to continue expressing, privately and publicly, your deep concern about the deterioration of the human rights situation in China and Tibet. We ask you to convey the message to President Xi that the Chinese government's current policy on human rights is unacceptable and a threat to bilateral relations.

In particular, and in line with the EU's obligation and commitment to promote values of human rights and democracy through its external action, we urge you to call upon President Xi to:

- Remove restrictions on freedom of information and expression, including on the Internet, and end the harassment of journalists and bloggers
- Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Amend Chinese State Security laws in relation to definitions of 'crimes' of "*endangering state security*", to prevent "*organizing, scheming and carrying out activities to split the nation and sabotage national unity*" being arbitrarily applied to simple and peaceful acts of freedom of expression and assembly
- Release all those detained for the sole reason of exercising their fundamental rights or protesting peacefully against Chinese repressive measures such as Xu Zhiyong, Liu Xiaobo, Ilham Tohti, Dhondup Wangchen, and other human rights defenders and activists
- Address the deep-rooted causes of discontent in Xinjiang and Tibet, which have resulted in the current wave of Tibetan self-immolations
- Resume the Sino-Tibetan dialogue, which has now been stalled since 2010, in order to contribute to a durable solution of the crisis in Tibet and to the improvement of the human rights situation of Tibetan people

We thank you for your consideration and are looking forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Matteo Mecacci
President of ICT



Karim Lahidji
President of FIDH



Gerard van Vliet
President of LvRM



Cc:

- *Franciscus Timmermans, Dutch Foreign Affairs Minister*