

## 2014-15 Tibet in Parliament

Details and links of when and how Tibet and related matters have been raised in the UK parliament during the current parliamentary session (started 4 June 2014).

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- 10/12/14: Commons oral: Debate on Tibet and freedom of expression
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- Useful Links

28 January 2015: House of Commons: International Development: Sustainable Development Goals

Tibet was referenced during a debate on the Seventh Report from the Environmental Audit Committee, on Connected World: Agreeing ambitious Sustainable Development Goals in 2015.

Kerry McCarthy (Bristol East, Lab): ... Goal 10, which is that, "The world is on track to avoid dangerous climate change and is less vulnerable to its impacts"...

... Goal 10 is about linking human development with the future of the planet. As has been said, we cannot eradicate poverty unless we tackle climate change. It has an impact in many ways. It affects whether a country can produce enough food to feed its people and whether people can move beyond subsistence farming to being able to make a living from farming. It affects the water supply. For example, we can look at the impact that climate change and glacial melt are having on the mountainous areas of Nepal and Tibet, which are sometimes described as the third pole because they make up the third biggest ice mass after the Arctic and Antarctic. It causes natural disasters that range from droughts to floods and that include typhoons, tropical storms and landslides due to soil degradation. ...

Read full debate (reference in column 964) | Index

10 December 2014: House of Commons: Westminster Hall: Debate on Tibet and Freedom of Expression

A 90-minute adjournment debate, titled "Tibet and Freedom of Expression", was held in Westminster Hall, the secondary debating chamber of the House of Commons. The debate was proposed and led by Fabian Hamilton (Leeds North East, Lab).

[Read full debate](#) | [Read Tibet Society's report & summary](#)

2 December 2014: House of Commons: Foreign Affairs Committee: Hong Kong Visit

During an emergency debate on China's ban the Foreign Affairs Committee's visit to Hong Kong, the following reference to Tibet was made.

Mr Frank Roy (Motherwell and Wishaw, Lab): ... Unfortunately, on Friday last week, we were told directly that the Chinese Government would not allow us to enter the territory of Hong Kong. As I said earlier, that is unprecedented. During this Parliament alone, the Foreign Affairs Committee has visited countries such as Saudi Arabia and Russia, which have had internal problems and which would not have been too happy about the Committee doing an inquiry. Regardless of their opinions, we were allowed to visit, to meet people and to publish our reports. In previous Parliaments, as we have heard, the Committee has visited China, including Tibet. We have never been denied entry to any country. In fact, no Committee of this House has ever been denied entry to any country. ...

[Read full debate \(reference in column 186\)](#) | [Index](#)

22 October 2014: House of Commons: Debate on Hong Kong

During a debate on Hong Kong, the following reference was made on Tibet and the UK's foreign policy towards China.

Martin Horwood (Cheltenham, Lib Dem): ...The [Hong Kong] issue also has lessons for UK foreign policy towards China, which, I hope the Minister will not mind my saying, has been a bit unsophisticated at times in recent years. It has been so dominated by the need to trade and the desire to have a beneficial economic relationship that we have underestimated some of the multiplying concerns about the impact of China as an emerging superpower...

... There is also the issue of China's role on the UN Security Council and its inability to support what most of us in this Chamber would have seen as very necessary action in the middle east and elsewhere. In addition, there is China's role in Africa and its exploitation of natural resources not only in China itself, but in Africa and other parts of the world, which raises the question of whether that is really sustainable. There is also its domestic human rights record, including the number of executions taking place in China; and the attitude to self-determination in other parts of Chinese territory, such as Tibet.

[Read full debate \(reference in column 287WH\)](#) | [Index](#)

24 July 2014: House of Lords: Motion: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

During a debate on Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, concerning freedom of belief, the following reference was made to Tibet:

Lord Alton of Liverpool (CB): ...Turning to the Far East, I hope we will hear whether we have protested about the demolition of Protestant and Catholic churches there; the continued detention of the Catholic bishop of Shanghai, Thaddeus Ma, arrested in 2012; and the well-being of the Tibetan Buddhist monk and scholar Tenzin Lhundup, about whom nothing has been heard since his arrest in May, and the self-immolation of 131 Tibetans since 2009. In 2009, I visited Tibet with the noble Lord, Lord Steel. Together, we published our report *Breaking the Deadlock* and, in highlighting the religious dimension, we argued: "Any attempts to resolve the political situation ... must take due account of the profound spiritual life of Tibetan people"...

[Read full debate \(reference at column 1294\)](#) | [Index](#)

19 June 2014: House of Commons Written Answers: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tibet

Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield, Labour (Co-op)): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts and other senior figures in the United Nations and the EU on

human rights abuses in Tibet.

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We remain concerned about the situation in Tibet. Ministers regularly raise their concerns with Chinese counterparts, and we highlight our concerns in the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy.

We regularly work with international partners on these issues, including the EU and the UN Human Rights Council. We believe that long term stability in Tibet will be best achieved through respect for the universal human rights and genuine autonomy for Tibet within the framework of the Chinese constitution.

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19 June 2014: House of Commons Written Answers: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China

David Simpson (Upper Bann, Democratic Unionist): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation in China.

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We do have concerns about restrictions to civil and political freedoms in China, particularly around ethnic minority rights; the death penalty; and freedom of expression, association and assembly.

The climate for human rights defenders and civil society is very difficult, and security in areas with ethnic minorities remains tight.

Ministers regularly raise human rights issues with Chinese counterparts, and we highlight our concerns in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy.

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18 June 2014: House of Commons: Written Answers: Prime Minister: China

Kerry McCarthy (Bristol East, Lab): To ask the Prime Minister whether he plans to discuss (a) the abolition of the death penalty, (b) freedom of expression and (c) freedom of religion or belief and (d) Tibet with the Chinese Premier during his visit to the UK.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to her on 17 June 2014, Official Report, column 504W.

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17 June 2014: House of Commons: Written Answers: Prime Minister: China

Kerry McCarthy (Bristol East, Lab): To ask the Prime Minister (1) what his objectives are for discussions on human rights with the Chinese Premier, Li Keqiang during his visit to the UK this month; (2) if he will discuss climate change with his Chinese counterpart during his visit to the UK; (3) what discussions he has had on the Government's Action Plan on Business and Human Rights in advance of the visit by his Chinese counterpart to the UK.

The Prime Minister: I plan to hold wide-ranging discussions with Premier Li. We have a foreign policy that is based on our values, and we consistently raise them with the Chinese Government, including during high level dialogues. I am very supportive of the business and human rights agenda, and action against climate change is a priority for the Government.

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17 June 2014: House of Lords: Motion: Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (EUC Report)

During a debate on the EUC's report on The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the following reference to Tibet was made:

The Earl of Sandwich (CB): ...The wild card is, of course, China, whose premier, Li Keqiang, is in London this week. We in the UK have a lot of ground to make up if we are going to attract more trade with China while retaining our proud position on issues such as Tibet, human rights and student visas. It seems very likely, as the noble Lord, Lord Tugendhat, has said, that the TTIP will help us in this situation in the long run...

Read full debate (reference at 3.56pm, column 738) | Index

10 June 2014: House of Commons: Written Answers: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tibet

Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield, Labour (Co-op)): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to his Chinese counterpart on human rights abuses in Tibet.

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): Our concerns are highlighted in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy: [www.hrdreport.fco.gov.uk](http://www.hrdreport.fco.gov.uk) the latest edition of which was published on 10 April. We last raised Tibet at the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue on 20 May, where we covered concerns about ethnic minority rights, as well as the criminalisation of self-immolation.

Mr Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received from (a) the Tibetan Government in exile and (b) human rights charities on human rights abuses in that country.

Mr Swire: Officials regularly meet with human rights non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to discuss the situation in Tibet. They last did so in May, following the UK-China Human Rights dialogue. I will be meeting with representatives from a number of Tibet NGOs later this month.

We also receive occasional updates from the Central Tibetan Administration, also known as the Tibetan Government in exile. We believe that meaningful dialogue is the best way to address and resolve the underlying grievances of the Tibetan communities and we continue to urge all sides to restart talks.

Mr Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to reduce human rights abuses in Tibet and to offer support for victims of such abuses.

Mr Swire: We remain concerned about the situation in Tibet.

We regularly discuss our concerns on Tibet with the Chinese authorities, most recently through the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue on 19-20 May 2014 where we covered concerns about ethnic minority rights, as well as the criminalisation of self immolation. Our concerns are also highlighted in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy, the latest edition of which was published on 10 April.

Mr Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is on Tibetan independence.

Mr Swire: Our position on Tibet is clear and unchanged. As the Prime Minister outlined in Parliament on 8 May 2013, we

regard Tibet as part of the People's Republic of China. We believe that long-term stability in Tibet will best be achieved through respect for universal human rights and genuine autonomy for Tibet within the framework of the Chinese constitution.

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10 June 2014: House of Lords: Debate following Queen's Speech

In the debate following the Queen's Speech (4th Day), the following references were made regarding the Dalai Lama and UK-China relations:

Lord Tugendhat (Con): ... We, the EU in general and Britain in particular, should also bear in mind our experience with Russia in our dealings with that other great autocratic power, China. As it has demonstrated on many occasions, China does not hesitate to use whatever leverage it has in relations with other countries in pursuit of its diplomatic and strategic aims. Her Majesty's Government have had experience of that when they were frozen out by Beijing after the Dalai Lama incident. Now I am very much in favour of doing more trade with China and encouraging Chinese investments in the United Kingdom. We are a long way behind our EU partners, notably Germany, in developing economic links with China and we should try to catch up. However, we must also be aware that in China commercial and financial relations are always subordinate to diplomatic and strategic considerations and that Chinese companies are instruments of the Chinese state, not free-standing, independent entities.

So, as with Russia, and in conjunction with our EU partners, we need to develop a framework of rules and criteria within which to conduct our economic relations with China. As with Russia, the aim must be to ensure that we do not lay ourselves open to pressure and blackmail. Unfortunately, I feel that we are at the moment tilting in the wrong direction. I refer in particular to the bending of the rules to enable Chinese banks to set up branches rather than subsidiaries in the City of London. We have offered Chinese nuclear power station suppliers the inducement of high, guaranteed returns. It is difficult to think of an industry more sensitive than the supply of nuclear power stations and it seems strange that we should particularly invite investment into that area by a state with the characteristics of the Chinese People's Republic...

Read full debate (this reference at 3.47pm, column 255) | Index

## Useful Links

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Write to your MP online: [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com)

Find out more about your MP: [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com)

Tibet in Parliament (by parliamentary session):

2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-12 (pt 1) | 2010-12 (pt 2) | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15

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