

2016-17 Tibet in Parliament (part 1)

Details and links of when and how Tibet and related matters have been raised in the UK Parliament during the 2016-17 parliamentary session. (Part 1: 18 May - 31 October 2016).

Part 1 (18 May - 31 October 2016)

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Useful links

27 October 2016: Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Human Rights

Tim Loughton (East Worthing & Shoreham) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policy on China of the recommendations contained in the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission report, published on 28 June 2016. (Asked on 19 October 2016. Written question 49390)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): I refer my Hon. Friend to the answer given by the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon. Baroness Anelay of St Johns, to the noble Lord Alton of Liverpool, on 26 September 2016 (PQ HL1811), copied below for ease of reference:

"My officials and I have read the report with interest. Although the Government was not asked to give evidence to it and the views stated within it do not reflect Government policy, there is much in the report with which we agree. We are already pursuing an approach consistent with many of the recommendations. For example my Ministerial colleagues and I regularly raise concerns about the crackdown on human rights lawyers, repressive legislation, and challenges to freedom of religion or belief. Equally, there are parts of the report which require further investigation to substantiate the claims made, for instance about organ harvesting."

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27 October 2016: Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tashi Wangchuk

Tim Loughton (East Worthing & Shoreham) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Chinese counterpart on the case of Tashi Wangchuk who is currently awaiting trial in Yushu, Qinghai Province. (Asked on 19 October 2016. Written question 49389)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We raised the case of the Tibetan language advocate Tashi Wangchuk at the UK-China human rights dialogue, scheduled which took place on 27 October. I previously raised our concerns about Tashi Wangchuk with the Chinese Ambassador, in writing, on 1 August 2016.

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27 October 2016: Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tibet: Buddhism

Tim Loughton (East Worthing & Shoreham) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent steps he has taken to raise the issue of harassment and persecution of Tibetan Buddhists in Tibet with the Chinese government. (Asked on 19 October 2016. Written question 49382)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): I refer my Hon. Friend to my answer of 18 October 2016 (PQ 48663).

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27 October 2016: Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tibet: Religious Freedom

Tim Loughton (East Worthing & Shoreham) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Chinese counterpart on religious freedom in Tibet; and whether he has received reports on expulsions of Buddhist students and the demolition of dwellings at the Larung Ghar Buddhist Institute in Sichuan province. (Asked on 19 October 2016. Written question 49381)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): I refer my Hon. Friend to my answer of 18 October 2016 (PQ 48663). We are aware of, and concerned by, reports of the closure or demolition of churches and monasteries and that individuals are being harassed or detained for their beliefs across China. However, I am unable to comment in detail on the demolitions at Larung Gar, as British diplomats are not currently allowed to travel to the area, so my information is partial. Our Consulate General in Chongqing is seeking further information on the situation.

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21 October 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tibet: Visits Abroad

Tim Loughton (East Worthing & Shoreham) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when a UK (a) Minister and (b) official last visited (i) the area designated by the Chinese government as the Tibetan Autonomous Region and (ii) the areas of Tibet subsumed by the Chinese government into China in the 1960's; what requests for such visits are outstanding; and if he will make a statement. (Asked on 13 October 2016. Written question 48566)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): I refer my Hon. Friend to the answer given by the former Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for East Devon (Mr Swire), to the Hon. Member for Dundee West (Mr Law), on 4 May 2016 (PQ 35590), copied below for ease of reference:

"The Hon. Member for Bury South (Mr Lewis) was the last serving Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) minister to visit the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), in September 2009. An FCO official last visited the TAR in June 2014. We continue to press the Chinese authorities for further access."

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21 October 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tibet: Dams

Tim Loughton (East Worthing & Shoreham) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the (a) Chinese and (b) Indian authorities on the damming of rivers in Tibet and the effect of that action on water supplies to India. (Asked on 13 October 2016. Written question 48565)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We have had no discussions with the Chinese or Indian authorities on the damming of rivers in Tibet.

The UK supports sustainable economic development in Tibet. Decisions about the management of shared regional resources, like water, are best taken in consultation with neighbouring countries.

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21 October 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Gedhun Choekyi Nyima

Tim Loughton (East Worthing & Shoreham) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he last raised the detention of the Panchen Lama with the Chinese authorities; and if he will make a statement. (Asked on 13 October 2016. Written question 48564)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We raised the case of the Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, at the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue in 2014. The Chinese authorities stated in September 2015 that the Panchen Lama was "leading a normal life" in China.

We urge China to ensure that any restrictions on the Panchen Lama's freedom of movement and communication are lifted, so that he may select the career, education or religious life of his choosing. We will continue to support calls by the UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief for the relevant authorities to facilitate a meeting between the Panchen Lama and independent international observers.

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21 October 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Human Rights

Tim Loughton (East Worthing & Shoreham) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs,

at what (a) ministerial (b) official level the Government will be represented in the next round of the human rights dialogue with the Chinese authorities. (Asked on 13 October 2016. Written question 48563)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): I intend to open the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue later this month. As in previous years, the UK delegation will be led by the Director of Asia Pacific Directorate in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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20 October 2016: House of Lords: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: UN Human Rights Council

Baroness Deech (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the criteria set by the UN General Assembly for election to the UN Human Rights Council in Resolution 60/251 in relation to the candidacies of China, Saudi Arabia and Russia. (Asked on 10 October 2016. Written question HL2159)

Baroness Anelay of St Johns (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): The UK carefully considers its votes against the criteria set out by the UN General Assembly; that members uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights and fully cooperate with the Council. It is the UK's longstanding policy not to publicise how it votes.

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18 October 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tibet: Human Rights

Catherine West (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with (a) his Chinese counterpart and (b) officials from Tibet on human rights in Tibet. (Asked on 13 October 2016. Written question 48663)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We do have concerns about human rights and freedoms in Tibet. I raised our concerns about the Tibetan language advocate Tashi Wangchuk and Tibetan Blogger Druklo (aka Shokjang) with the Chinese Ambassador, in writing, on 1 August 2016. In that letter I also pressed him to allow UK diplomats to visit the Tibetan Autonomous Region.

Neither I, nor my officials, have been able to have recent discussions with officials from the Tibetan Autonomous Region. However my officials have had discussions with non-government organisations on the situation in Tibet.

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11 October 2016: House of Commons: Debate: Forced Organ Removal: China

A debate on the practice of forced organ removal in China was held in Westminster Hall, the secondary chamber. The debate was moved by Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP). Tibet was referenced multiple times:

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): ... This disgusting and disgraceful forced organ transplantation goes to the very highest level of Chinese government and those involved need to be accountable for their actions. By 2001, Chinese military hospitals were "unambiguously targeting select Falun Gong prisoners for harvesting", and by 2003 the first Tibetans were being targeted as well. There is systematic forced organ transplantation taking place of Falun Gong followers, of Christians and other ethnic groups and of those who are in prison, sometimes for minor charges. Then China goes to

Tibet, where it has some control, and it targets people there as well; its horrific targeting for forced organ transplantation goes far beyond China.

Fiona Bruce (Congleton) (Con): ... Credible research findings strongly suggest that many thousands of people are being killed for their organs, particularly people in minority groups, most notably practitioners of Falun Gong - a peaceful, meditative practice - although Tibetans, Uighurs and, potentially, house Christians have also been targeted for political reasons. The allegations that Falun Gong practitioners, Tibetans and Uighurs have been victims of that horrific practice are well documented and strong.

... The European Parliament adopted a written declaration in July 2016 on stopping organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience in China that, among other clauses, states:

“There have been persistent credible reports on systematic, state-sanctioned organ harvesting from non-consenting prisoners of conscience in the People’s Republic of China, primarily from practitioners of Falun Gong peaceful meditation and exercises but also from Uighurs, Tibetans and Christians... Owing to the severity of underlying abuse there is a clear need to organise without delay an independent investigation into ongoing organ harvesting in the People’s Republic of China.”

Margaret Ferrier (Rutherglen and Hamilton West) (SNP): ...The conclusions reached in the report “Bloody Harvest”, updated and republished in June this year, make it clear why they deserve to be treated with the utmost seriousness. The report found:

“Organ transplantation volume in China is far larger than official Chinese government statistics indicate...The source for most of the massive volume of organs for transplants is the killing of innocents: Uyghurs, Tibetans, House Christians and” - as we have heard today - “primarily Falun Gong”.

Catherine West (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab): ... In the context of the alleged organ harvesting, the Uyghurs, the Tibetans, the House Christians and Falun Gong tend to be the groups that come up again and again in the human rights legislation, in the recordings and in other evidence.

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27 September 2016: House of Lords: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Human Rights

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty’s Government what representations they are making to the government of the People’s Republic of China about releasing all human rights lawyers detained since July 2015, ceasing the harassment of lawyers and activists, and upholding the rule of law. (Asked on 12 September 2016. Written question HL1815)

Baroness Anelay of St Johns (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We have repeatedly raised our concerns with the Chinese authorities about the detention, arrest and disappearance of Chinese lawyers and human rights defenders. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Reading West (Mr Sharma), raised their cases most recently with the Chinese Ambassador on 1 August. We urge the Chinese authorities to release the detained lawyers and ensure all detainees have access to legal counsel of their choice.

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26 September 2016: House of Lords: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Human Rights

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the effectiveness of the UK–China Human Rights Dialogue and the EU–China Human Rights Dialogue, and whether they will establish specific benchmarks for progress in those dialogues. (Asked on 12 September 2016. Written question HL1814)

Baroness Anelay of St Johns (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): The UK-China Human Rights Dialogue provides a platform to highlight a wide range of the Government's human rights concerns to relevant Chinese officials. It also provides an opportunity for frank, expert exchanges on policies as they are applied in the UK and China. In recent years workshop themes have included: judicial procedures; disability rights; and minority languages.

The Dialogue is an addition to, rather than a replacement for discussions in other bilateral and multilateral fora. It is one part of our strategy to promote British values in China, and we do not have benchmarks to measure the Dialogue in isolation. We do measure progress against our overall strategy and we report on it in the FCO Annual Human Rights report.

The EU-China Human Rights dialogue functions in a similar way, and we engage closely with the organisers to share views and objectives. We are confident that the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue is coherent with UK objectives.

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26 September 2016: House of Lords: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Human Rights

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to engage in increased consultation with civil society and UK-based and international human rights NGOs around the UK–China Human Rights Dialogue, including increasing transparency and accountability. (Asked on 12 September 2016. Written question HL1813)

Baroness Anelay of St Johns (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): Ministers and officials meet civil society representatives on a regular basis to hear their views and benefit from their expertise on the human rights situation in China. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Reading West (Mr Sharma) met Chinese NGOs during his recent visit to China. He plans to host a round table with UK-based NGOs at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the near future.

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26 September 2016: House of Lords: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Human Rights

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to conduct a comprehensive review of British foreign policy towards China, including consulting human rights NGOs, human rights lawyers, activists, religious communities and NGOs in China, exiled Chinese dissidents, journalists, academics and other experts, as recommended by the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission. (Asked on 12 September 2016. Written question HL1812)

Baroness Anelay of St Johns (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): The Government's policy towards China is set by the National Security Council. We have a strong relationship with China, as described in the Global Partnership announced at the State Visit of President Xi to the UK in 2015, and reiterated by the Prime Minister, my Rt

Hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May), during her recent visit to China. In addition to working with China to solve global challenges, and to develop strong trade, investment and people links, we also promote British values. To inform our policy, we maintain contact with a wide range of stakeholders, including human rights NGOs, journalists and academics. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Reading West (Alok Sharma) met Chinese human rights activists when he visited China in August.

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26 September 2016: House of Lords: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Human Rights

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the findings and recommendations in the report published in June by the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, *The Darkest Moment: The Crackdown on Human Rights in China 2013–2016*. (Asked on 12 September 2016. Written question HL1811)

Baroness Anelay of St Johns (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): My officials and I have read the report with interest. Although the Government was not asked to give evidence to it and the views stated within it do not reflect Government policy, there is much in the report with which we agree. We are already pursuing an approach consistent with many of the recommendations. For example my ministerial colleagues and I regularly raise concerns about the crackdown on human rights lawyers, repressive legislation, and challenges to freedom of religion or belief. Equally, there are parts of the report which require further investigation to substantiate the claims made, for instance about organ harvesting.

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20 September 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Religious Freedom

Natalie McGarry (Glasgow East) (Independent): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Chinese counterpart on reports of the persecution of Christians and other minorities living in China. (Asked on 12 September 2016. Written question 45890)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): The Government is concerned by restrictions placed on Christianity in China, such as the demolition of churches, the removal of crosses from buildings, and harassment or detention of individuals for their beliefs. The freedom to practise, change or share your faith or belief is a fundamental human right that all people should enjoy.

We are robust in raising religious freedoms with the Chinese authorities. The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon. the Baroness of Anelay of St Johns DBE, raised the destruction of churches and religious symbols with the Director of the National People's Congress Foreign Affairs Committee on 7 July 2016. I also raised the case of Ding Cuimei, who reportedly died while protesting the demolition of her church in Zhejiang province, with the Chinese Ambassador on 1 August.

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14 September 2016: House of Commons: EDM 465: Declaration for Humanity signing at St Andrews

Primary sponsor: Stephen Gethins (North East Fife) (SNP)

Early Day Motion 465: That this House celebrates the signing of the Declaration for Humanity by senior religious figures and scholars in Parliament Hall in St Andrews on 23 September 2016; notes the declaration, written by St Andrews

Professor of Divinity Mario Aguilar, incorporates the teachings of different faiths and embraces the basic principles of humanity, equality, diversity and freedom; further notes the declaration marks the culmination of the Year of Interfaith Dialogue initiative set up by Professor Aguilar to stimulate conversation about the commonalities between the different faiths of the world; is delighted that the declaration will be signed by the representative of Pope Francis, members of various other Christian Churches, Hindu community members from the UK and India, ambassadors of Muslim nations, leaders of the UK Jewish community and the representative of the Dalai Lama; and encourages schools, community organisations and faith groups around the world to use the declaration to form discussion and foster the idea of a common humanity as a tool against radicalisation.

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9 September 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tibet: Human Rights

Tom Brake (Carshalton and Wallington) (Lib Dem): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answers of 10 May 2016 to Questions 36574 and 36576, in what way his Department carried out its assessment of the human rights situation in Tibet; and for what reasons the 2015 Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy contained no relevant information on that situation. (Asked on 02 September 2016. Written question 44792)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): Our assessment of the situation of Tibet is based on range of credible sources and information gathered by diplomats and officials. I draw the Hon. Members attention to the most recent version (updated in July 2016) of the Human Rights and Democracy report where we outline a number of concerns relating to Tibet. We raise these concerns regularly, for example I raised two Tibetan cases involving freedom of expression (Tashi Wangchuk and Druklo (Shokjang)) with the Chinese Ambassador on 1 August.

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9 September 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Department for International Development: Tibet: Climate Change

Tom Brake (Carshalton and Wallington) (Lib Dem): To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 11 May 2016 to Question 36578, what the findings relevant to Tibet were of her Department's-funded assessments of glacial melt and rivers in the Himalayas. (Asked on 02 September 2016. Written question 44791)

Rory Stewart (Minister of State, Department for International Development): As noted in the Answer of 13 April 2013 to Question 151281, DFID funded two assessments on glacial melt in the Himalayan region. It has since piloted a method of assessing glaciers in the region using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). The studies indicate that the Himalayan glaciers have been shrinking overall at 0.4-0.5% per year since the 1950s. The studies are available on DFID's Research for Development website.

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26 July 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tibet: Human Rights

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions the Government has had with (a) the Dalai Lama and (b) dissidents on human rights in Tibet. (Asked on 18 July 2016. Written question 43040)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): The Dalai Lama has not visited the

UK since September 2015. Ministers did not meet the Dalai Lama during that visit. Officials discuss the human rights situation in Tibet regularly with NGOs and human rights activists. UK officials visited Tibetan regions in Gansu in March. UK officials have requested permission to visit the Tibet Autonomous Region later this year, but the Chinese authorities have not yet confirmed a date.

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26 July 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tibet: Human Rights

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the government of China on human rights in Tibet. (Asked on 18 July 2016. Written question 43037)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We set out our human rights concerns about China, and specifically in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office annual report on Human Rights and Democracy. The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon. the Baroness of Anelay of St Johns raised our concerns about the Tibetan language advocate Tashi Wangchuk with the Director of the National People's Congress Foreign Affairs Committee on 7 July.

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25 July 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Human Rights

Steve McCabe (Birmingham, Selly Oak) (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2016 to Question 39875, when he plans to hold the next round of the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue. (Asked on 15 July 2016. Written question 42896)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We continue to press the Chinese authorities for dates for the next round of the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue. We value the Dialogue to raise the full range of our human rights concerns, but in its absence we raise individual cases of human rights abuse in other meetings. The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon. the Baroness of Anelay of St Johns raised the importance of the Dialogue and two individual cases of concern relating to religious freedoms and minority rights with Fu Ying, chair of China's National People's Congress' Foreign Affairs on 7 July.

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19 July 2016: House of Commons: Early Day Motion 358: Mining at Gong-ngon Lari, Tibet

Primary sponsor: Anne McLaughlin (Glasgow North East) (SNP)

Early Day Motion 358: That this House notes with concern the treatment of protesters in Amchok, Tibet who were highlighting concerns about the environmental damage being caused by gold mining at Gong-ngon Lari; further notes that this site has occasioned at least 30 non-violent protests; notes the latest protest occurred in early June with local protesters appealing to the environmental protection provisions that appear in the Chinese constitution; regrets that many protesters have since reported being assaulted and imprisoned by the security services; and believes that China's exploitation of the environmental resources of Tibet should only proceed if consented to by those affected locally.

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13 July 2016: House of Commons: Early Day Motion 323: China and Organ Harvesting

Primary sponsor: Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP):

Early Day Motion 323: That this House expresses deep concern over forced organ harvesting being carried out in China; further expresses dismay at the ongoing persecution of Christians in China and that human rights are being denied in Tibet and Hong Kong; and calls on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to bring these matters to the attention of the Chinese government as soon as possible

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12 July 2016: House of Commons: Oral Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Human Rights: China

Jeff Smith (Manchester, Withington) (Lab): What recent discussions he has had with the Chinese Government on the promotion of human rights in that country.

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): We regularly raise human rights with the Chinese authorities. I most recently discussed human rights with the Chinese ambassador a fortnight ago, and my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed the human rights dialogue with State Councillor Yang last week. In addition, my right hon. Friend raised concerns last month with the president of the Supreme People's Court about the detention of human rights defenders.

Mr Smith: Following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, we will need to develop a new set of trading relationships with China. What reassurances can the Minister give me that that process will not diminish our ability or our resolve to publicly condemn the Chinese Government for human rights abuses?

Mr Swire: The hon. Gentleman will know that we are very keen to get a date for the annual human rights dialogue. That is the right architecture within which to raise individual cases. However, we will continue to raise individual cases of human rights abuse, and if there is no human rights dialogue, we will have to increase that.

Mary Glendon (North Tyneside) (Lab): Can the Minister tell us exactly what action he is taking to question the Chinese Government about their brutal persecution of those who peacefully practise Falun Gong, particularly in relation to the live harvesting of organs?

Mr Swire: We have raised concerns about reports of organ harvesting, as well as about the torture and mistreatment of detainees, during the annual UK human rights dialogue. We will continue to do that at the next round. Equally, we pay close attention to the human rights situation in China and we remain extremely concerned about restrictions placed on freedom of religion or belief of any kind, including Falun Gong practitioners.

Catherine West (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab): I should like to associate myself with the Minister's remarks about Jo Cox, the MP who tragically lost her life. She was a fellow colleague from the 2015 intake. She was an advocate for refugees and a fierce and passionate champion of the dispossessed. We miss her very much at FCO questions, and her memory inspires us all as parliamentarians to work selflessly for those whose voice is rarely heard.

In relation to the human rights situation in China, Amnesty International has stated that at least 248 human rights lawyers and activists have been targeted by the authorities over the past year. They include the prominent lawyer, Wang Yu. She and 12 others are now under formal arrest on charges of subverting state power. What is the Minister's assessment of this targeting of human rights activists? Does he agree that, on occasion, the Government's approach lacks assertiveness in relation to human rights in China?

Mr Swire: I should like to associate myself with the hon. Lady's first remarks, but I dissociate myself from her concluding remark. I believe that, on balance, we have got the situation just about right. We are concerned about the human rights lawyers and we continue to raise the issue. Most recently, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary did so with the president of the Supreme People's Court of China, Zhou Qiang, on 9 June. He has also raised our concerns with the Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, and we will continue so to do.

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7 July 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Religious Freedom

Mr Nigel Dodds (Belfast North) (DUP): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the government of China on the persecution of Christians and other faith groups. (Asked on 30 June 2016. Written question 41584)

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): We pay close attention to the human rights situation in China and remain concerned by all reports of restrictions to freedom of religion or belief and persecution of faith groups. The full range of our human rights concerns in China are set out in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy, most recently published on 21 April. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond), has continued to raise concerns about the detention of human rights lawyers, a number of whom have represented clients who have been punished for exercising their freedom of religious belief. He did so with both Foreign Minister Wang Yi in January and President Zhou Qiang of the Supreme People's Court last month.

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4 July 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tibet: Conditions of Employment

Catherine West (Hornsey & Wood Green) (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will ask the International Labour Organisation to assess the adequacy of (a) native Tibetan and (b) other workers' rights in Tibet against internationally agreed standards and agreements to which the Chinese government is a signatory. (Asked on 20 June 2016. Written question 41072)

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): As the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond), told the House on 12 January 2016, Official Report, column 694, we will be raising the issue of labour activists at the next round of the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue. This will address workers' rights across the People's Republic of China, including the Tibetan Autonomous Region. We will consult a range of relevant stakeholders ahead of that Dialogue.

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4 July 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tibet: Overseas Aid

Catherine West (Hornsey & Wood Green) (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what development assistance his Department provides to native Tibetans in that country. (Asked on 20 June 2016. Written question 41071)

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): The Government regards the Tibet Autonomous

Region (TAR) as part of the People's Republic of China (PRC). We do not provide any development assistance through specific projects in the TAR. Across China, the UK supports projects over a range of priority areas, including torture prevention, abolition of the death penalty, promotion of civil society and of women's rights. As set out in the FCO's annual report on human rights and democracy, we assess that our interventions have led to positive change.

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4 July 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tibet: Population

Catherine West (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information his Department holds on the proportion of (a) native Tibetans, (b) Han Chinese and (c) other people who were resident in Tibet in (i) 2015, (ii) 2005 and (iii) 1995. (Asked on 20 June 2016. Written question 41070)

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): None.

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4 July 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Tibet: Conditions of Employment

Catherine West (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of workers' rights for Tibetans working in that country. (Asked on 20 June 2016. Written question 41069)

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): The Government regards the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) as part of the People's Republic of China (PRC). We consistently urge China to respect all fundamental rights across the PRC, including in Tibet, in line with both its own constitution and the international frameworks to which it is a party. We have made no specific assessment of the workers' rights of Tibetans. However, as the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond), told the House on 12 January 2016, Official Report, column 694, we will be raising the issue of labour activists at the next round of the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue.

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27 June 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Detainees

Tim Loughton (East Worthing & Shoreham) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which cases of people detained in China were raised during the state visit of President Xi Jinping in October 2015; and what assurances and undertakings were given in respect of those cases. (Asked on 15 June 2016. Written question 40717)

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): During the State Visit, we made clear the importance that the UK attaches to frank exchanges with China on human rights. The Foreign Secretary, my Rt. Hon Friend, the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond) raised our concerns at the ongoing detention of Chinese human rights lawyers with the Chinese Foreign Minister and the President of China's Supreme People's Court (in January and June 2016). We will continue to make representations on a wide range of cases during the annual UK-China Human Rights Dialogue.

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27 June 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Human Rights

Tim Loughton (East Worthing & Shoreham) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what human rights objectives the Government set for the state visit of President Xi Jinping to the UK in October 2015; and what progress has been made on achieving those objectives. (Asked on 15 June 2016. Written question 40716)

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): One of our objectives for the State Visit was to ensure that the UK and China could continue detailed expert exchanges on human rights and rule of law. Agreement on this issue was reflected in the leaders' press conference and joint statement. Our broader objectives on human rights in China are set out in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's annual report on human rights and democracy, most recently published on 21 April. That report notes that in 2015 China continued to face human rights challenges, and that we have raised our concerns both bilaterally and in multilateral fora.

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27 June 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Overseas Trade

Tim Loughton (East Worthing & Shoreham) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Government has taken steps to ensure that any UK Trade and Investment deals with China announced during President Xi's visit to the UK of 2015 are consistent with the UK's obligations and stated commitments under the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights. (Asked on 15 June 2016. Written question 40715)

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): The Government provides guidance to UK companies to help them comply with their obligations on human rights throughout their global operations, including with respect to China. We maintain the joint FCO-UKTI Overseas Business Risk (OBR) service, which ensures up to date information on relevant human rights issues in China. In line with the revised National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (published May 2016) we encourage all companies doing business overseas to follow the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. We have published guidance on transparency in supply chains and reporting requirements under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Government is also working to advance the rule of law in China to promote a fair, transparent and predictable business environment for British business in China.

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27 June 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: China: Non-governmental Organisations

Chris Law (Dundee West) (SNP): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to China on retracting its law on the management of foreign NGOs, passed on 28 April 2016; and if he will make a statement. (Asked on 13 June 2016. Written question 40454)

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): I refer the Hon. Member to my answer of 9 May in response to written question 36260.

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20 June 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Dalai Lama

Chris Law (Dundee West) (SNP): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make it his policy not to recognise any future Dalai Lama where that person has been selected by the Chinese government.

(Asked on 10 June 2016. Written question 40268)

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): I refer the Hon. Member to my answer to his question of 26 April (35532). The Government does not have a policy on the reincarnation of Tibetan Lamas, which includes the Dalai Lama.

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20 June 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Asia: Climate Change

Chris Law (Dundee West) (SNP): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 26 April 2016 to Question 35542, on Asia: climate change, if he will draw to the attention of the Department for Energy and Climate Change the report to which he refers in that Answer. (Asked on 10 June 2016. Written question 40245)

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): We have drawn the report prepared by the International Campaign for Tibet entitled "Tibet's water and global climate change" to the attention of the Department for Energy and Climate Change.

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20 June 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Tibet

David Mackintosh (Northampton South) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Chinese counterpart for the release of Tashi Wangchuk. (Asked on 10 June 2016. Written question 40229)

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): We plan to raise the case of Tashi Wangchuk at the next round of the UK-China human rights dialogue.

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20 June 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Tibet

David Mackintosh (Northampton South) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Chinese government on the detention and charging of Tibetan education advocate Tashi Wangchuk; and what response he has received to those representations. (Asked on 10 June 2016. Written question 40201)

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): We plan to raise the case of Tashi Wangchuk at the next round of the UK-China human rights dialogue.

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20 June 2016: House of Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Tibet

David Mackintosh (Northampton South) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Chinese counterpart on releasing the Tibetan blogger Druklo. (Asked on 10 June 2016. Written question 40200)

Hugo Swire (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): We plan to raise the case of Druklo (also known as Shokjang) at the next round of the UK-China human rights dialogue.

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23 May 2016: House of Lords: Debate following Queen's Speech

In the debate following the Queen's Speech (3rd day), the following reference was made regarding the Dalai Lama:

Lord Goodlad (Con): Militarisation is no way to settle territorial disputes in the modern world. I suggest that China is much more likely to listen to the voice of reason if it is that of the European Union, provided that the European Union has had no recent conversations with the Dalai Lama, rather than the UK alone. International influence is not some academic abstraction of concern only to diplomats but is essential for the protection and promotion of our national interests. Together, the European Union can exercise much more beneficial influence than the UK alone. We should be in there shaping that influence rather than pulling out and putting our heads under the bedclothes.

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