

Tibet: Less freedom than North Korea

[31 January 2017] For the second consecutive year, Tibet has ranked as the second worst place in the world for freedom and human rights, according to a report published by Freedom House. Countries with appalling human rights records such as North Korea and Eritrea ranked better than Tibet; only Syria was considered worse out of the 210 countries and territories assessed.

On 31 January 2017, US-based NGO Freedom House published its annual report, Freedom in the World 2017, assessing the state of global freedom over the past 12 months.

As in last year's report, Tibet was ranked as the second worst country/territory for overall freedom, with only Syria ranked worse. Tibet received maximum ratings for the lack of political rights, civil liberties and freedom. Other countries considered "worst of the worst" by Freedom House, but below Tibet, include Eritrea, North Korea, Turkmenistan, South Sudan and Somalia.

Freedom House did not report in detail on Tibet, but in its country profile of China stated, "The [Chinese] government continued to impose conditions approaching martial law in Tibetan- and Uighur-populated regions of the country, refusing to reassess failed policies of repression for these ethnic minority groups."

China was ranked 24th out of the 195 countries and 15 territories that were scored. Both China and Tibet were given the status of "Not Free".

China was also marked as being on a "downward trend" with respect to freedoms and liberties. Freedom House stated this was due to, "the chilling effect generated by cybersecurity and foreign NGO laws, increased internet surveillance, and lengthy prison sentences for human rights lawyers, activists, and religious believers."

Freedom House noted that one of the key developments in China in 2016 was the aim of the Chinese government to "tighten control" over religion. The report specified, "A plan for "comprehensive management" of all religious activity and organizations and the "Sinicization" of religion in China, laid out at an April party conference, further restricted the scope for religious freedoms."

The report also highlighted the Chinese promotion of nationalism, with an increasingly hostile anti-Western tone, the use of defending national security to "justify criminal prosecutions of civil society and democracy activists, human rights lawyers and bloggers" and increased internet surveillance resulting in the imprisonment of those promoting "politically sensitive" issues online.

Freedom House heeded a warning over the general trend towards nationalism led by authoritarian rulers who ignore international commitments and focus primarily on protecting their own interests. "History shows that this strategy leads to ruin. When universal values and international law are cast aside, global affairs are governed by force."

Further reading: [Freedom House report](#) | [country scores](#) | [China profile](#)

Previous reports:

2016: Tibet second only to Syria for lack of freedom (Tibet Society)

2015: Tibet ranked 'Worst of the Worst' for political and civil rights (Tibet Society)

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