

2016-17 Tibet in Parliament (part 2)

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 2: from 1 November 2016).

Part 2 (from 1 November 2016)

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- 01/11/16: Welcoming the Sikyong to the House of Commons

Useful links

16 January 2017: Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Human Rights

Tom Brake (Carshalton and Wallington) (Lib Dem): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Chinese counterpart on the protection of (a) Ilham Tohti and (b) other human rights defenders in China. (Asked on 09 January 2017. Written question 59189)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We raised the case of the Professor Ilham Tohti and other human rights defenders with the Chinese authorities at the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue on 27 October, the opening of which I attended. We called upon the Chinese authorities to release Professor Ilham Tohti and those in detention for peacefully expressing their views. We also called for human rights activists detained in China to have their civil and political rights protected, in accordance with China's constitution and international human right commitments.

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9 January 2017: 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, whether human rights issues were raised during the recent (a) UK-China Economic and Trade Dialogue and (b) UK-China People to People Dialogue. (Asked on 20 December 2016. Written question 58398)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): The Secretary of State for Health, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for South West Surrey (Mr Hunt), raised human rights issues in his discussions with Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong on 5 December during the UK-China 'People to People' dialogue. Human Rights issues were not raised at the UK-China Economic and Financial Dialogue on 10 November.

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9 January 2017: 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, what steps he is taking to secure visits to Tibet by UK diplomatic personnel. (Asked on 20 December 2016. Written question 58397)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We regularly press the Chinese authorities for permission for a Foreign and Commonwealth Office official or Minister to visit the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). We last raised this issue with the Chinese authorities at the UK/China Human Rights Dialogue on 27 October. The Chinese have yet to grant our request.

The last visit by an FCO official to the TAR was in June 2014, and the last Minister to visit was the Hon. Member for Bury South (Mr Lewis) in September 2009.

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9 January 2017: 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, if he will seek to arrange a ministerial visit to Tibet. (Asked on 20 December 2016. Written question 58396)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We regularly press the Chinese authorities for permission for a Foreign and Commonwealth Office official or Minister to visit the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). We last raised this issue with the Chinese authorities at the UK/China Human Rights Dialogue on 27 October. The Chinese have yet to grant our request.

The last visit by an FCO official to the TAR was in June 2014, and the last Minister to visit was the Hon. Member for Bury South (Mr Lewis) in September 2009.

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9 January 2017: 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, whether the case of Tashi Wangchuk was raised in the recent UK-China Human Rights Dialogue; and if he will make a statement. (Asked on 20 December 2016. Written question 58395)

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, which took place on 27 October. We urged the Chinese authorities to release him from detention.

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9 January 2017: 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, whether he has raised with the Chinese authorities the detention of the family of Tashi Rabten. (Asked on 20 December 2016. Written question 58394)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We are deeply concerned by reports that Tashi Rabten was involved in an act of self-immolation in Gansu Province on 8 December, and that members of his family have been detained by the Chinese authorities. We are seeking further information on the situation.

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9 January 2017: Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Buddhism

Tim Loughton (East Worthing & Shoreham) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterpart in China on sentencing of Drugdra, Lobsang Khedrub, Lobsang Gephel, Lodro, Ta're Kyi, Bonkho Kyi, Tsultrim (Trotsik Tsultrim), Tsultrim (Tsulte), Akyakya and Losang Sonam for their involvement in the Dalai Lama's 80th birthday celebrations. (Asked on 19 December 2016. Written question 58314)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We have concerns about human rights and freedoms in Tibet. We have not raised these specific cases with the Chinese Government. However, the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson), raised our concerns about human rights in Tibet with the Chinese Government at the UK-China Strategic Dialogue on 20 December. We also raised our concerns about Tibet and a number of individuals with the Chinese Government at the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue on 27 October. I attended the opening of the dialogue. We have recently received information on the sentencing of these individuals, and are in touch with our Embassy in Beijing to obtain further details.

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13 December 2016: Commons: Debate: International Human Rights Day

Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley) (Lab): ...The UK must also promote a universal rights agenda, and not tout human rights as British values, which simply plays into the hands of those dictators positioning themselves as protectors against western infiltration and domination. Everyone is entitled to fundamental rights by virtue of our common humanity, no matter who they are or where they come from.

Secondly, we need to push back a lot harder against the worrying spread of the adoption of legislation that seeks to clamp down on civil society and non-governmental organisation activity by restricting freedoms of speech, assembly and association, and/or by imposing unduly burdensome administrative requirements. Civil society and NGO representatives, such as lawyers, journalists and human rights defenders, are vital to checking the abuse of power, promoting good governance, monitoring compliance with international human rights standards and obtaining justice...

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): ...The right hon. Member for Cynon Valley raised the question of whether we view trade as somehow more important than human rights, but trade and human rights are not mutually exclusive; in fact, they are mutually supportive...

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17 November 2016: Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: UN Human Rights Council

Chris Law (Dundee West) (SNP): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he supported the re-election of China to the UN Human Rights Council on 28 October 2016; and if he will make a statement. (Asked on 11 November 2016. Written question 52716)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): The UK has a long-standing policy of not revealing our voting intentions nor how we voted in the past.

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1 November 2016: Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Human Rights

Fiona Bruce (Congleton) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the People's Republic of China on the detention of human rights lawyers since July 2015. (Asked on 27 October 2016. Written question 50855)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): I raised the cases of the 15 Chinese lawyers and rights activists in pre-trial detention since July 2015 with the Chinese ambassador, in writing, on 1 August 2016. We also raised their cases most recently with the Chinese authorities at the UK/China Human Rights Dialogue on 27 October when we called on them to release those individuals detained for seeking to protect the rights of others.

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1 November 2016: Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Human Rights

Fiona Bruce (Congleton) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what his assessment is of the effectiveness of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue. (Asked on 27 October 2016. Written question 50854)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): We understand the next EU/China Human Rights Dialogue will be held before the end of the year. Our assessment is that the EU/China Dialogue, like our bilateral dialogue, is a valuable opportunity to share the full range of human rights concerns with China in a frank manner.

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1 November 2016: Commons: Written Question: Foreign and Commonwealth Office: China: Human Rights

Fiona Bruce (Congleton) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what his assessment is of the effectiveness of the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue. (Asked on 27 October 2016. Written question 50853)

Alok Sharma (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): The latest round of the UK/China Human Rights Dialogue took place on 27/28 October. I attended the opening of the Dialogue. The UK is one of only a few countries with such a platform, which enables us to discuss the full range of our human rights concerns. During the dialogue we covered freedom of expression, religion and belief, minority rights and the death penalty. We were also able to share a number of human rights cases of particular concern. The dialogue is one way to discuss with China our shared international human rights commitments.

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1 November 2016: Welcoming the Sikyong to the House of Commons

The Speaker of the House of Commons (John Bercow): Order. Just before we take the question, I am very pleased to announce that today we are joined by Lobsang Sangay, the Sikyong or Prime Minister of the Tibetan Government in exile. It is a pleasure and a privilege, Sir, to welcome you to the House of Commons.

Victoria Prentis (Banbury) (Con): What an honour that is, Mr Speaker...

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