

# Lucerne Manifesto on the People's Republic of China

24 November 2021

The appalling level of human rights abuses, the massive repression of all opposition movements, and the increasingly aggressive assertion of political, economic and territorial interests by the Communist Party (CP) and Xi Jinping's government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) threaten to undermine the international human rights system.

Under these circumstances, „business as usual“ is not an option. Political and economic decision-makers must demand universal human rights at all levels and in all matters when dealing with the PRC. Moreover, the international community must send a clear message to Beijing that human rights are non-negotiable.

As discussions on dealing with the People's Republic of China once again marginalise human rights concerns at the annual meeting of the Europa Forum Lucerne, the undersigned parties publish this Lucerne Manifesto as an urgent wake-up call. It clearly sets out the extent, scope and irreparability of the human rights violations committed by the government of the PRC and calls for decisive action on the part of the international community.



## **The signatories make the following demands:**

### **To the People's Republic of China**

- 1 Respect, protect and guarantee human rights in the PRC
- 2 Immediately cease threats in military and other forms to Taiwan and fully respect self-governance and self-determination of the Taiwanese people
- 3 Re-establish self-determination and the rule of law in Hong Kong in accordance with international agreements
- 4 Peaceful negotiation of the future status of the occupied territories of Tibet, East Turkestan and Southern Mongolia with the consent of affected people and their representatives

### **To the community of democratic and human rights oriented countries**

- 1 Defend multilateralism and internationally recognised human rights norms in a strong alliance with like-minded states
- 2 Coherent foreign policy: consistent demand for universal human rights at all levels of the hierarchy and in all affairs
- 3 Demand a peaceful resolution of the conflicts with Taiwan, Hong Kong and the occupied territories in accordance with the will and interests of the affected populations
- 4 Demand respect for human rights and opposition movements
- 5 Take a clear and united stance against the intimidating and aggressive behaviour of the PRC
- 6 Diplomatic boycott of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games

### **To business leaders**

- 1 Conduct human rights due diligence in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises when engaging in company shareholding, imports, exports and/or financial services in connection with the PRC
- 2 Engage with partner companies to demand respect for human rights. In case of concerns, terminate cooperation if the situation does not improve and a connection with human rights violations cannot be ruled out
- 3 Establish and implement a specific code of conduct for the concerning the PRC
- 4 Communicate to PRC offices expressing serious concern, requesting information and transparency, and demanding independent access to operations

### **To leaders from civil society**

- 1 Clearly identify human rights violations by the PRC as such
  - 2 Do not exclude human rights in the promotion of environmental sustainability
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## Background

In recent years, the **human rights situation** in the PRC has **deteriorated** significantly. Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo was locked away and died in detention in 2017. Chinese academics who speak critically of the government are locked up. Uyghur economics professor Ilham Tohti, who was awarded the 2019 Sakharov Prize by the European Parliament, was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2014. Freedom of the press no longer exists in the PRC. Opposition members are persecuted, arrested and often tortured. The death penalty silences people once and for all and stigmatises their families and friends.

**Human rights lawyers** have been criminalised since a state campaign began in July 2015. At that time, more than 300 lawyers were arrested. After his release from four and a half years of detention, lawyer Wang Quanzhang reported how he was tortured during interrogations. Even after the end of a prison sentence, the government often keeps people under house arrest or locks them up in a police station.

**Religious freedom** for people of Islamic and Buddhist faiths as well as Falun Gong practitioners has been drastically restricted in recent years. **Christian communities** are also being pressured to keep religious symbols and religious life out of public places, and crosses are being removed from churches. Church buildings, mosques and monasteries are desecrated or destroyed, even if they were built with official permission. Falun Gong practitioners are victims of torture, organ theft and murder by the PRC authorities.

In **Tibet**, PRC authorities arbitrarily arrest activists. In detention, Tibetans are tortured and abused on the orders of the CP leadership to force confessions to alleged offences. It is prohibited to possess a picture of the Dalai Lama. In 1995, communist rulers abducted the 6-year-old 11th Panchen Lama of Tibet, an important figure in Tibetan Buddhism. The Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama share a unique spiritual relationship. To this day, there is no trace of the now 31-year-old Panchen Lama. Instead, the Communist Party of the PRC has appointed another boy, son of a CP member, as the Panchen Lama of their choice. More than 10,000 monks and nuns have been evicted from the large Larung Gar and Yachen Gar Buddhist learning centres since 2016, some of which have been destroyed, and put into camps for 'political re-education'. Tibetan children are not allowed to go to monasteries on holiday to learn the Tibetan language. Kindergartens have recently been required to teach in Mandarin. Schools that cultivate the Tibetan language and tradition are being forcibly closed and in some cases demolished. Activists who campaign for the preservation of the Tibetan language, such as Tashi Wangchuk, are sentenced to several years in prison. Since 2008, 155 people in Tibet have self-immolated in protest and despair over the PRC's oppression.

In **Southern Mongolia**, Mongolian parents protested against the PRC authorities' announcement that school lessons will increasingly be taught in Mandarin. Thousands were arrested as a result. The government of the PRC speaks of bilingualism, but de facto the Mongolian language is being pushed back.

In **Hong Kong**, the communist leadership of the PRC has abolished the principle of 'one country, two systems', therefore disregarding international agreements and effectively suspending them. With the National Security Act, the rule of law was suppressed: secret security agencies and the police were given far-reaching powers, the right to a fair trial was abolished, judicial supervision was weakened and civil society and the media were severely restricted. As a result, the opposition no longer dares to voice its opinion in public. More and more independent journalists and NGOs like Amnesty International are leaving Hong Kong. In October 2021, the removal of the country's only Tian'anmen memorial was announced – an attack on the truthful writing of history.

In **East Turkestan** (Chin.: Xinjiang), Muslim and Turkic populations are systematically oppressed. Several parliaments and the US government have classified the situation as genocide. Through a regime of complete surveillance and arbitrary detention, members of the Uighur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and other populations are deliberately intimidated and forced to assimilate. Since 2017, over 1.8 million people have been detained in re-education camps. A long beard or contacts with relatives abroad can be sufficient reason for an arrest. Uighur cemeteries and mosques are destroyed, women are forced to undergo IUD-insertions and sterilisations, and children are forcibly sent to state-run boarding schools. Under the pretext of 'vocational training', detainees in prisons and re-education camps are forced to work and even after release, so-called 'graduates' are transferred into forced labour. Additionally, so-called 'surplus labour', for example farmers, is also transferred to state-sponsored forced labour. Government documents from 2020 show that 2.6 million members of Uyghur and other Turkic populations have been forcibly transferred within East Turkestan and throughout the PRC.

Internationally, the PRC government is increasingly aggressive in **redefining human rights norms** enshrined in international law. The CP firmly rejects any criticism as "interference in internal affairs". The PRC government prioritises economic right to development, while presenting civil and political rights as negotiable. At the same time, the PRC increasingly exploits its economic power to get other countries to cooperate or at least remain silent. The gigantic investments under the Belt and Road Initiative threaten to leave cities, regions and countries heavily dependent on the PRC.

For years, the PRC has pursued a costly strategy to expand its **soft power** in the context of ideological competition and to strengthen its global influence. The Olympic Games, held in Beijing and its surrounding districts in February 2022, once again provide the PRC government with an opportunity to present itself as supposedly open-minded, peaceful and progressive, while distracting attention from systematic repression. The justification put forward in the context of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, that the Games would prove to be a catalyst for improved human rights, has turned into the opposite: violations of human rights increased dramatically.

## Signatories

This Manifesto is signed by the following legal entities:

European Federation of Taiwanese Associations



Hongkonger in Deutschland e. V.



Society for Threatened Peoples Germany



Society for Threatened Peoples Switzerland



Swiss-Tibetan Friendship Association



Taiwan Association for Human Rights



Tibetan Community in Switzerland & Liechtenstein



Tibetan Community in Switzerland & Liechtenstein  
Tibeter Gemeinschaft in der Schweiz & Liechtenstein

Tibetan Women's Organisation in Switzerland



Tibetische Frauen-Organisation in der Schweiz  
Tibetan Women's Organisation in Switzerland

Tibetan Youth Association in Europe



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Verein Tibeter Jugend in Europa  
Tibetan Youth Association in Europe

Uigurischer Verein Schweiz



UGURISCHER VEREIN SCHWEIZ  
ASSOCIATION OUIGHOURS SUISSE

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