



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

January 5, 2022

The Honorable
Patrick Leahy, Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your December 14 letter to Under Secretary Zeya conveying your views of how the Administration and the Congress can work together to advance U.S. policy on Tibet. We share your concerns for the human rights and dignity of Tibetans, and we appreciate long-standing and bipartisan Congressional attention to these matters. Secretary Blinken's designation of Under Secretary Zeya to serve concurrently as the U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues demonstrates the importance the Administration places on this agenda.

Consistent with the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, as amended by the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020, the United States remains committed to promoting respect for the human rights of Tibetans. The Department calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to end its abuses of Tibetans in China as well as its harassment and surveillance of Tibetan diaspora communities, including in the United States. The Biden-Harris Administration regularly raises our concerns with the PRC government regarding such abuses, including the arbitrary detention of Tibetans. We also have taken concrete action to stem the PRC's repression, most recently on December 16 with the Department of the Treasury's imposition of investment restrictions affecting eight Chinese entities that facilitate the PRC's surveillance of members of ethnic and religious minority groups in China. One of those entities developed software that supposedly recognizes Tibetans and members of other specific minority groups and alerts authorities when it finds them.

The Biden-Harris Administration also remains committed to helping Tibetans preserve their distinct historical, linguistic, cultural, and religious identity. This

includes calling on the PRC to end its interference in the selection, education, and veneration of the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan Buddhist lamas. The succession of the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan Buddhist leaders is a religious matter which should be reserved exclusively for the Tibetan Buddhist community.

Consistent with the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018, the Biden-Harris Administration is committed to increasing access to Tibet for U.S. diplomats, other officials, journalists, and tourists, commensurate to the access PRC officials and other Chinese nationals enjoy in the United States. We recognize that such access is critical to monitoring events within Tibet, shining a light on abuses, and providing support to individuals facing repression.

The United States also continues to call on the PRC government to resume dialogue, without preconditions, with the Dalai Lama, his representatives, or democratically elected Tibetan leaders, that leads to a negotiated settlement on Tibet. We believe a negotiated agreement that leads to meaningful autonomy for Tibetans and ensures they can preserve their religion, culture, and language provides the best hope for long-term stability in the region.

Finally, the Biden-Harris Administration is proud to provide humanitarian assistance to Tibetan refugees, including life-saving support and protection services to the most vulnerable. We will continue to encourage the registration and documentation of all Tibetan refugees in Nepal, so they are able to work, own businesses, and have equal access to public education, health services, social protection, and livelihoods.

In each of these endeavors, we are committed to working closely with Tibetan religious, cultural, and political leaders, including the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration, our international allies and partners, and the Congress.

Thank you again for your letter, as well as for the steadfast support of the Congress for Tibetans and members of other religious and ethnic minority groups in China facing repression. Under Secretary Zeya welcomes an opportunity to discuss these matters with you in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Naz Durakoglu". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Naz Durakoglu
Senior Bureau Official
Bureau of Legislative Affairs