

## **Concern about the reports on Chinese police stations in the Netherlands**

Dear Prime Minister Mark Rutte,

On behalf of the 1000 Tibetans living in the Netherlands, of whom a large number have already obtained Dutch citizenship, and on behalf of their Dutch supporters, we would like to express our grave concern about the media reports concerning the Chinese police stations in The Netherlands. We thank the Dutch people and government for the great welcome and safety that the Tibetan refugees have found here.

This letter is written with the confidence of enjoying the support of 30.000 Dutch friends and supporters organised in our associations. Our common wish is that human rights will be respected all over the world, and that the rule of law and its principles as exercised in the Netherlands will one day become a reality in Tibet.

However, we unfortunately have to realise that the feeling of security that we enjoyed for a long time is no longer guaranteed in the same way as it used to be. This has essentially to do with the changes in China. China turned into a threat for the world. We Tibetans, Uighurs and other groups have warned for a long time of the potential danger that this regime could pose for all open societies.

For some years now, we have been observing an increase in abuses by the Chinese authorities towards Tibetans living here. (It is appropriate to speak of "transnational repression" in this context). Specifically, in recent months, Tibetans living here (with and without Dutch citizenship) have been called by alleged Chinese authority representatives. Approximately half of all Tibetans we interviewed in recent days were affected by these calls. Obviously, there is a systematic approach. Some of these people identified themselves as representatives of the embassy, and some just concealed their affiliations.

We are grateful that the media have taken up the issue. However, there is a risk that it leads to the stigmatisation of the victims if not a clear and loud stand is taken. We are aware that these assaults, which are just below or slightly above the border of illegality, are difficult for the Dutch authorities to handle and can't be pursued in an adequate manner. Consequently, this also has the potential of trivialization of these offences.

Transnational repression has a variety of negative impacts, such as stopping the flow of information from the affected communities to the outside world. The Dutch population, especially the business community, may also become a target of such methods.

We request you to take decisive and concrete action against these abuses by the Chinese state against people living in the Netherlands. In our previous contacts with the authorities, we were advised to report to the Dutch police, an advice that we will follow. However, the nature of the problem is of a larger dimension and therefore requires a more comprehensive overall approach, including a public component.

- We would like to suggest that the prime minister publicly receives a group of Tibetans, Uighur and other groups who are targeted by the Chinese authorities because of their belief in human rights and democracy and thus publicly expresses his concern for their situation.

- We ask the government in the forthcoming discussions on the risks of cooperations with China to take a broader approach and develop an EU coordinated position on fighting the effects of transnational repressions and reducing the dependency on Chinese influence.

Yours sincerely,

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Wangpo Tethong, director International Campaign for Tibet Europe / Netherlands

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