

Question no 1: At your consultation meeting, you spoke to misinformation and disinformation about the Tibetan community. Would you please expand on that topic and your suggestions for how to respond?

Thank you Madam Commissioner for the opportunity to speak on the important issue of foreign interference. I will start by sharing two cases which we felt was targeted to mislead Canadians about human rights situations in Tibet.

In 2018, a delegation representing Tibet Autonomous Region came to Canada and testified before the Foreign Affairs Committee, repeating the CCP lines on Tibet. In a response to a question on whereabouts of Tibet's Panchen Lama (Gedhun chokyi Nyima), the delegates responded that Panchen Lama was alive, in good health and did not wish to be disturbed. For a quick context, Panchen Lama is widely considered as one of the most important figures in Tibetan Buddhism and has historically played an important role in recognizing the reincarnations of the Dalai Lama and vice-versa. On May 14th, 1995, the 14th Dalai Lama recognized and announced a six-year-old kid Gedhun Chokyi Nyima as the 11th Panchen Lama. Three days later, the newly identified six-year-old Panchen Lama got abducted along with his family, and since then, the world hasn't seen or heard him. We don't know what he looks like or what he sounds like. As China has ramped up its claims and preparations to identify and appoint the next Dalai Lama, we believe there is going to be massive influence programs internationally over the next few years and we can't let Canadian soil and Canadian freedom to be taken for granted, to be used in assisting PRC in imposing state interferences in the religious freedom of the Tibetan people.

We also saw an incident in recent years where a Chinese proxy organization disseminated a document intended to mislead Canadians about the human rights situation in Tibet. The group claimed that Tibet now enjoys freedom of religion, economic development, ecological and environmental preservation, and improvement of Tibetans' livelihood. This fit very well with PRC's narrative on Tibet and whitewashes the actual situations in Tibet, including a situation of Tibetans not being allowed to keep any photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama who they revere as living god, active state interferences in the process of identifying the reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama through legislative impositions, through forced migrations of millions of Tibetan nomads and through forced separation of over 1 million Tibetan children into residential boarding schools. The proxy organization even forged a signature of a Canadian official, to give it an appearance of legitimacy. It's very clear that such actions by state sponsored or influenced proxies are intended to mislead public perceptions about Tibet.

Taking these two specific cases and many other instances into consideration, I would like to suggest exploring the feasibility of principle of reciprocity in relationship between Canada and China. The fact that PRC delegates could come to Canada, and speak what, where and whom they want to, and the fact that there are heavy restrictions on Canadian delegates to even visit Tibet, and other sensitive regions, restrictions on who, where and what they want to speak doesn't seem fair, equal or reciprocal. The detention and the treatment of Canadians Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavour highlighted the risk of arbitrary arrests and lack of due process for Canadian citizens in China. Canadian journalists and businesses face similar challenges whereas Chinese media and businesses have relatively free access in Canada. So, I hope we can integrate

some aspect of healthy reciprocity in the relationship between Canada and China through this commission.

Question no. 2: At your consultation meeting, you discussed the fear members of your community experience, its impacts on their lives, and how it may be alleviated. Please explain.

More than any individual act of foreign interferences, including the two cases of misinformation and disinformation I mentioned earlier, what I find more damaging is the fear that FI creates among public, especially among forced migrant diaspora like Tibetans and Uyghurs, who are vulnerable to foreign state threats. The fear that FI creates has lasting impact, has ripple effects, often resulting into self-censorship, coercion, psychological stress, doubts and not fully exercising or even knowing the democratic rights in our new adopted home country.

The fear of being watched, being surveiled, being spied on makes them afraid of participating in public events like annual Tibetan Uprising Day on March 10th, afraid of communicating with their family and friends in Tibet, afraid of speaking out publicly or even privately about actual situations in Tibet in case if they get one of those rare opportunities to visit Tibet. I would like my community members and members from any other communities in Canada to feel confident about their rights as citizens, as residents of Canada. I would like them to feel that they are protected, that they can live their lives freely, get education they want to, do job they are passionate about and speak what they genuinely believe in without any fear from foreign states.

In that regard, I would like to suggest capacity building and awareness raising programs at community level. And I would like to suggest visits from key officials involved in the study of the foreign interference in Canada to extend the education about the FI beyond advocacy group and media. I believe this would be a crucial part of successful implementation of this well-researched and consulted study on foreign interferences in Canada. And my final suggestion is that don't let anti-asian racism narrative and rhetoric derail this important study and initiative from moving ahead. The first line of victim of foreign interference by the PRC is actually Asian, including pro-democracy Chinese, Hong Kongers, Taiwanese, Falun Gong practitioners, Uyghurs and Tibetans. Thank you for your time and attention.

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