



**Foreign, Commonwealth
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Tom Tugendhat MP
Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
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20 October 2020

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your letter of 7 October regarding reports of forced labour in China.

As the Minister for Asia, Nigel Adams MP, made clear to Parliament in a Westminster Hall Debate on 7 October, the report by the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC), published on 22 September, is very concerning. It includes allegations of coercive vocational training and labour transfer and describes a large-scale campaign to retrain and transfer some rural labourers within Tibet, and beyond. These allegations bear similarities with the reported system of forced labour in Xinjiang, including the military style vocational training, a focus on Chinese language training, and local middlemen receiving financial incentives to transfer labourers. We have not seen clear evidence that all the policies implemented in Xinjiang are replicated in Tibet: for example, there is no evidence of mass extrajudicial internment, or of workers being kept in closed and securitised environments.

As is always the case when approaching fresh allegations of this nature, we will rigorously assess the validity of the claims, including by seeking corroborating evidence. We are in contact with the report's author, other experts on Tibet, and our international partners to further our understanding of the situation.

We follow the situation in Tibet closely and raise our concerns with China bilaterally and at the UN. We have raised the findings of the IPAC report with the Chinese Embassy in London and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing. We will continue to raise the situation in Tibet with the Chinese authorities. At the UN Third Committee on 6 October we called on China to respect the human rights of religious and ethnic minorities in Tibet, alongside 38 other countries in a joint statement also covering Xinjiang and Hong Kong. At the UN Human Rights Council, we used China's most recent Universal Periodic Human Rights Review to publicly challenge its record in the region. We will continue to seek opportunities to raise the situation in Tibet in relevant UN bodies.

We also engage with Tibet-focused NGOs in both London and Beijing to assist us in monitoring human rights developments in the region, and hear first-hand about their work.

This Government is committed to ensuring that UK businesses act responsibly in tackling modern slavery. We take a cross-government approach, with regular close co-ordination between the FCDO, BEIS, DIT and the Home Office. In respect of Xinjiang, officials co-ordinate through a specific cross-Whitehall working group to provide comprehensive advice to Ministers.

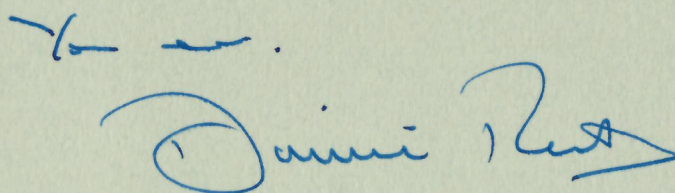
We have used Overseas Business Risk guidance, issued jointly by the FCDO and DIT to urge all businesses involved in investing in Xinjiang, or with parts of their supply chains in the region, to conduct appropriate due diligence to satisfy themselves that their activities do not support or risk being seen to be support any human rights violations or abuses. We keep the content and geographical scope of the guidance under close review. We also set clear expectations of UK businesses' conduct through our National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, and use export controls to prevent the export of goods that might contribute to human rights abuses. FCDO officials have met business and industry stakeholders regularly over the past year to make them aware of the scale of forced labour in Xinjiang and across China.

Through the Modern Slavery Act, the Government has mandated greater transparency from businesses so consumers, investors and campaigners can hold them to account. A recent review of the Act has led the Home Office to announce a series of measures to strengthen it, including enhancing transparency by requiring organisations to publish their statements on the new Government digital reporting service. These measures will be introduced as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

In respect of Magnitsky sanctions, we continue to carefully consider further designations under the Global Human Rights regime, keeping all evidence and potential listings under close review. As I have made clear to Parliament on a number of occasions, it would be inappropriate to speculate on future designations because to do so would lessen their impact.

I look forward to the opportunity provided by the FAC's inquiry into Xinjiang, and the BEIS Select Committee's inquiry into forced labour in UK value chains, to examine the issues around forced labour in China in more depth.

Thank you again for your continued engagement and interest in these issues. My colleagues and I will seek opportunities to update you on our approach to the situation in Tibet as it develops.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Dominic Raab', is written over a faint, larger signature that is partially obscured.

THE RT HON DOMINIC RAAB MP



Foreign Affairs Committee

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From the Chair
Tom Tugendhat MP

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
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7 October 2020

Dear Foreign Secretary,

I am writing to you regarding reports of forced labour in China. Much attention is rightly focused on the situation in Xinjiang, but the Members are also deeply concerned about forced and exploitative labour in Tibet. Credible reports have surfaced detailing the transfer of thousands of so-called “rural surplus workers” who have been through “military style” training to prepare them for factory work.

I would therefore be grateful if you could respond to the following questions:

- What conversations have you and diplomatic staff based in China had with Chinese counterparts on this issue?
- What actions is your Department planning to take? Are Magnitsky sanctions against key officials in Tibet being considered?
- What discussions have you had with colleagues in Departments such as BEIS and DIT to help keep UK supply chains free from forced labour?
- What liaison have you had with the Home Office regarding possible investigations into UK companies under the Modern Slavery Act?
- What work is being done to ensure UK private sector companies take further measures to remove forced labour from their supply chains?
- What support is the FCDO giving to civil society actors in and outside Tibet who are working on this issue?
- Do you intend to raise this matter at the international level, for example through the UNHRC?

It would be helpful to have a response by 21 October. I intend to place your response in the public domain.

Best wishes,

TOM TUGENDHAT