



Canadian Coalition  
on Human Rights in China

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Coalition Canadienne  
pour les droits humains en Chine

November 5, 2014

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Re: Visit to China

Dear Prime Minister,

We are a Coalition of Canadian organizations across the country concerned about human rights in China.<sup>1</sup> We are writing to urge that during your official visit to China over the coming days, in advance of next week's APEC Leaders' Meeting, you, and Ministers and other Canadian officials travelling with you, raise the issue of human rights during bilateral meetings with Chinese leaders and other events and opportunities.

As monitoring organizations with close links to individuals and groups inside China, we share a common unease with the growing disregard for basic rights and freedoms under President Xi Jinping's leadership. The Government of China is directly responsible for policies and actions that violate the human rights of workers, religious groups, journalists, and democracy activists. We have noted severe and widespread human rights violations against Falun Gong practitioners, and a distinct increase in both hate rhetoric and police violence against China's so-called ethnic minorities, including Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Mongolians.

Prime Minister, your visit to China this year comes against the backdrop of an inspirational commitment to democracy in Hong Kong, as hundreds of thousands have defied authority to claim the basic right to determine their own government.

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<sup>1</sup> Coalition members include: Amnesty International Canada (English branch); Amnistie internationale Canada francophone; Canada Tibet Committee; Canadian Labour Congress; Falun Dafa Association of Canada; Federation for a Democratic China; Canada-Hong Kong Link; Students for a Free Tibet Canada; Toronto Association for Democracy in China; Vancouver Society in Support of Democratic China; and Uyghur Canadian Society.



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In such a context, Canada must not reflect the point of view that economic cooperation and the promotion of human rights are unrelated ambitions. To visit China and attend the APEC meeting only to conduct “business as usual” would fly in the face of Canada’s firm commitment to human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We believe that what is needed during your visit to China is a strong and public expression about the importance of these principles.

The APEC Leaders’ Meeting offers an occasion for like-minded countries such as Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Japan and Mexico to stand together in the defence of human rights in China, particularly while international attention is focused there. **We therefore request that Canada take the lead in preparation of a side-statement to be issued with like-minded partners at the conclusion of the APEC meeting.** Issues to be highlighted in the statement include the following requests of the Chinese government:

- Early ratification of the UN’s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- An end to the persecution of various groups including Falun Gong, Tibetans, Uyghurs, democracy advocates and human rights defenders.
- A firm date for a visit by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to China, including Tibet and the Uyghur Region.
- Concrete efforts to address the concerns of Hong Kong residents seeking genuine universal suffrage in the election of political leaders and meaningful dialogue with student representatives to peacefully resolve the current crisis.

International trade and investment can be forces for good, but only when they take place within an enabling environment of good governance and respect for human rights. It is in the interests of all Canadians to encourage such policies within China.

Sincerely, on behalf of the Canadian Coalition on Human Rights in China,

Alex Neve  
Secretary General  
Amnesty International Canada (English branch)