



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### **China must immediately stop illegal ban on religious activities for Tibetan schoolchildren, ICT says**

<http://www.savetibet.org/china-must-immediately-stop-illegal-ban-on-religious-activities-for-tibetan-schoolchildren-ict-says/>

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China's ban on religious activities for schoolchildren in Tibet grossly violates international human rights law—as well as China's own legal requirements—and must immediately be put to an end, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) said today.

Chinese state media reported this week that underage students in the Tibet Autonomous Region must not take part in religious activities during their summer vacation, as stipulated in school regulations. According to an English-language report in the state-run “Global Times,” notices have been sent to both students and their parents, while authorities “have had students sign an agreement that they will not take part in any form of religious activity during the summer vacation,” the head of the political education department at Lhasa Middle School said in the report. The report does not state how students and families who breach the agreement would be punished.

“By banning schoolchildren from religious activities, the Chinese authorities are infringing upon basic principles of freedom of religion, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which China ratified in 1992. A state simply cannot ban children from religious activities,” ICT said.

The organization added: “The Chinese authorities must immediately end their policies of repression against Tibetan Buddhists and respect the right of Tibetan children to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.”

Earlier this month, ICT reported on young Tibetan monks being forced out of monasteries into government-run schools as part of China's drive to replace monastic education with political propaganda.

China's ban was revealed at the same time that the United States is holding its first-ever Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, in which representatives of the Dalai Lama as well as ICT and Tibetan Buddhists are taking part. The ministerial, held in Washington D.C., was opened this morning by US Ambassador at Large for Religious Freedom Sam Brownback, who in his remarks denounced the restrictions imposed by the Chinese government on religious activities of Tibetan Buddhists.