

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 16, 2015

Ambassador Cui Tiankai
Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States
3505 International Place NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Ambassador Cui,

We write to you to express our serious objections with recent actions taken by the government of the People's Republic of China. Specifically, we want to make clear our concerns about China's insistence that over 100 ethnic Uyghur asylum-seekers be repatriated from Thailand and China's sweeping crackdown on human rights activists and lawyers. We believe these acts violate universally recognized human rights and international law, China's obligations as a member of the United Nations, and the rule of law to which China professes adherence.

The repatriation of Uyghurs from Thailand is the latest in a campaign by your government to reclaim asylum-seekers internationally. Framing the entire group as "criminals" and "terrorists" and transporting them under black hoods is a gross misrepresentation of their identities and intentions for seeking asylum in Thailand. While many nations face some risk from radicalized terrorists, experts say that China deliberately overstates such risks to mask violence and oppression against them. The fact is that the Uyghur people face massive human rights abuses inside China's borders, and it is now widely suspected that the group deported from Thailand will face torture or more worrisome fates. We condemn these forced deportations and urge China to cease pressuring other nations to return refugees. Furthermore, we urge China to treat those repatriated and all Uyghurs transparently, allowing for third party access and protection.

We also condemn the arrests of over 150 human rights lawyers from across China this past weekend, a landmark development in another campaign of rights violations. China's colorful justification for this nationwide crackdown is that a law firm which takes on sensitive human rights cases was actually a "major criminal gang" which organized protests to "seriously disturb social order" for pay. Unfortunately, this crackdown appears to be nothing more than a continuation of China's efforts to eliminate through incarceration those willing to challenge government positions in public fora.

Individually, these actions violate the human rights fundamental to international norms and institutions. Despite recent statements from the highest levels of Chinese leadership, these actions seem to demonstrate that that the government of the People's Republic of China does not respect the rule of law. Collectively, they appear to be part of a pervasive government effort to suppress dissent, control communications, and consolidate power centrally. Neither the flight from abuse and oppression, nor the presentation of contrary positions inside China's own legal framework should be taken as a security threat. We strongly urge China to re-evaluate these policies.

Sincerely,



Matt Salmon
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Steve Chabot
Member of Congress



Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress



Dana Rohrabacher
Member of Congress



Joseph R. Pitts
Member of Congress