

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade – Human Rights Subcommittee
Inquiry into the Rights of Women and Children

QUESTION ON NOTICE / Spoken

QoN 002 – Inquiry into the Rights of Women and Children

Hearing Date: 16 August 2023

Topic: Tibetan Children

Senator Linda Reynolds

Question

We also had evidence of Tibetan children, something like 80% of them have been removed from their families into Chinese Boarding Schools. Just wondering if you could take that on notice as well, on any further information you have got and perhaps any action that DFAT may or may not be considering doing including Magnitsky sanctions which the US have already done in relation to Tibetan Children but also ongoing movement of labour into slave labour into Tibet.

Answer

We are aware of disturbing reports by UN experts of the separation of Tibetan children from families in Government-run boarding schools, and of forcible labour transfers of Tibetans to vocational training programmes. Given the difficulty of accessing Tibet in recent years, reports by UN experts and civil society form the basis of much of our understanding of the situation in Tibet.

We continue to raise concerns with the Chinese government about human rights violations in Tibet, most recently the Foreign Minister raised Tibet in her meeting with Director Wang Yi on 13 July.

The Government responds to each human rights situation of international concern based on what we assess will most effectively bring about change. Sanctions are one of a suite of measures the Government can use to respond to human rights situations of concern. Sanctions are not our only choice, and they will rarely be our first choice. Consistent with longstanding practice, we will not speculate publicly on sanctions.

The Australian Government is committed to strong action to address modern slavery, including human trafficking and forced labour. This includes strengthening Australia's domestic framework to ensure supply chains that start in, traverse through, or end in Australia do not promote, condone, or financially support forced labour. Australia also works closely with partners in our region to build awareness and help countries to strengthen their responses to modern slavery.