



SENATOR THE HON BOB CARR

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CANBERRA

The Hon John Murphy
Chair Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

15 APR 2013

Dear Mr Murphy

I refer to your letter of March 18, 2013, regarding a petition, recently submitted to the Standing Committee on Petitions, about the human-rights situation in Tibet.

I assure you that China is well aware of the Australian Government's concerns about the situation in Tibetan regions. Since the self-immolation protests began, in March 2011, we have made repeated representations to the Chinese Government, in Canberra, Beijing, and in provincial regions where most of the protests have occurred. In our representations we have consistently urged China to address the underlying causes of tension in Tibetan regions.

During the 14th Human Rights Dialogue, on July 10, 2012, in Canberra, we repeated calls for China to involve the Tibetan people in formulating the economic, social and environmental policies applicable to them and to allow more foreigners, including journalists, to visit Tibetan regions.

In addition to these representations, on March 19, 2012, in the Senate, I made my views clear when I said I was appalled by the self-immolations and that I deplored the circumstances that would give rise to this extreme and tragic form of protest.

It is disappointing that our requests for our Ambassador to visit Tibet have, so far, been denied. We have conveyed to China our concern about this outcome and we continue to seek an opportunity for the Ambassador, and other embassy officials, to visit Tibetan regions. Similarly, our request for a parliamentary delegation to visit Tibet in August 2012 was also refused.

The Australian Government continues to liaise regularly with like-minded countries about the human-rights situation in China, including in Tibetan regions. We do so in Beijing, through our embassy, and through other diplomatic channels.

Thank you once again for bringing these concerns to my attention. I trust that this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Bob Carr