



MEDIA STATEMENT

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China's National Park Project on The Tibetan Plateau: Conservation or Assimilation? What China Can Learn From Other Countries

China announced in December 2022 the selection of 49 candidate sites for building “the largest national park system in the world.” The site list included 13 on the Tibetan Plateau and accounted for 70 percent of the total area of national park candidate sites. Furthermore, a draft of a National Parks Law is being deliberated in China's National People's Congress and is expected to become law in 2025.

China's efforts to protect the landscape, rich biodiversity and environment of the Tibetan Plateau and mitigate climate change ought to be a positive development. However, there is serious concern that this ambitious initiative will lead to displacement of Tibetans, further assimilate Tibetans and Tibet into China, and will primarily benefit the Chinese community. The proposed national park system and drafting of the national parks law is moving ahead rapidly with no input and contribution from the Tibetan people who have lived on the Tibetan Plateau for centuries.

China's National Park Project on The Tibetan Plateau: Conservation or Assimilation? What China Can Learn From Other Countries, a new publication from the Asia Freedom Institute provides an overview of the scale of the project to transform the Tibetan Plateau in the name of ecological conservation. It advocates for taking the needs and concerns of the Tibetan population into consideration and offers models of successful co-management agreements.

“China should consider the proposed national parks on the Tibetan Plateau as autonomous areas where the control and management is in the hands of the Tibetan people - the true residents and stewards of the land since antiquity,” said Kelsang D. Aukatsang, AFI President.

The document can be downloaded from www.asiafreedominstitute.org.

The Asia Freedom Institute promotes democracy, human rights and religious freedom in China and Tibet.