

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Free Tibet Fukuoka

Mongolian writer and activist Munkhbayar Chuluundorj nominated for the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize

Mr. Munkhbayar Chuluundorj is an award-winning Mongolian journalist, poet, and human rights activist known for defending the linguistic, cultural, and historical identities of Southern Mongolians.

Mr. Munkhbayar Chuluundorj has been nominated for the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize by two Japanese National Diet members.

Hidetoshi Ishii from Japan, who served in the secretariat of the campaign to nominate Munkhbayar Chuluundorj for the Nobel Peace Prize, received an email from the Norwegian Nobel Committee on January 31 stating that his nomination had been accepted. Hidetoshi Ishii and his wife Yoko Ishii, who have promoted this campaign, are known as international human rights activists who support people suffering from oppression by the Chinese government, such as those in Tibet, Uyghur, Southern Mongolia, and Hong Kong.

Hidetoshi Ishii, Senior Advisor of Free Tibet Fukuoka, said: “The Nobel Peace Prize nomination for Mr. Munkhbayar Chuluundorj is not just an honor for him alone, but an inspiration to all who fight for freedom and human rights under oppression. The human rights situation in Southern Mongolia, which Munkhbayar has long fought for, must be improved. The Chinese government needs to change its policy. And the Mongolian government must immediately release Mr. Munkhbayar Chuluundorj”.

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The reasons for the nomination were stated as follows:

A founding member of the World Mongols Poetry Association, Munkhbayar Chuluundorj is a well-known journalist, poet, and human rights activist known for defending the linguistic, cultural, and historical identities of ethnic Mongolians in Southern Mongolia (i.e. Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China). Recently, he had been very active in the campaign to protect the right of children, particularly from Southern Mongolia to be educated in their native tongue. On February 17, 2022, Munkhbayar Chuluundorj was arrested in Ulaanbaatar for his vocal critique of the Mongolian government’s close ties with China and the shrinking rights of ethnic Mongols in Southern Mongolia. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison on June 28 for “collaborating with a foreign intelligence agency” against China. On December 21, the conviction of 10 years in prison was confirmed by the Supreme Court. Munkhbayar’s lawyer has dismissed the charges as false, and noted that “no article or clause of the constitution or any other laws of the independent country of Mongolia has ever stated to criminalize the citizens of Mongolia to defend the interest of China.” On January 12, 2023, over 100 global rights groups called for his immediate release. Munkhbayar’s unjust conviction is one in a long line of examples of the overreach of Beijing’s power outside of its borders, and China’s disregard for the sovereignty of other countries and international law. Human rights activists, lawyers, and writers from all across the world are calling for Munkhbayar’s release. Munkhbayar is a journalist who is fighting for the human rights of the oppressed. His unjust arrest is a sign that Mongolia, once a democracy, is coming under the influence of authoritarian China. We cannot overlook the fact that an authoritarian country is repainting democratic countries. In today's battle between authoritarianism and democracy, Munkhbayar, who is at the forefront of that battle, is the symbol of freedom of speech.