

Dear U.S. State Department Commission on Unalienable Rights,

This letter is from Safeguard Defenders, a Pan-Asian human rights NGO working with rule of law and human rights issues in some of the regions' most hostile environments.

We write this letter to express our concern regarding the potential harm that the final report produced by the Commission may have on internationally recognized human rights, and especially how it may be interpreted and used by regimes in the societies across Asia-Pacific most hostile to basic human rights and rule of law.

Based on comments made in public by members of the Commission, we would like to highlight our concern with attempts to separate between "unalienable" and "ad hoc" rights is not merely wrong, and a misinterpretation of the international human rights system but directly harmful to the foreign policy, safety, and leadership of the United States. Pushing ahead with such division, and to directly weaken the rights so long promoted by the U.S. will cause direct harm to the U.S. and reduce its power.

For an organization that works extensively across China, this is of particular concern, as it essentially gives the PRC ammunition to undermine rights using 'relativist' arguments, and to export such arguments to other countries, building a critical mass that could undermine the greater human rights system, and again, to the severe detriment to the United States.

With these considerations we express this concern and hope that it will be taken into consideration, to ensure that the U.S. does not take steps to undermine the international human rights system.

Yours sincerely,

Safeguard Defenders