Whistleblower Says U.N. Fired Her After Revealing Human Rights Council Collusion with China

November 23, 2021

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Breitbart News

<https://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2021/11/23/whistleblower-says-u-n-fired-her-after-revealing-human-rights-council-collusion-with-china/>

Whistleblower Emma Reilly said on Tuesday the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) terminated her employment less than 24 hours after [giving](https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2021/11/09/emma-reilly-une-lanceuse-d-alerte-seule-contre-les-nations-unies_6101442_3210.html) an interview to France’s Le Monde in which she revealed U.N. employees provided the brutal Chinese government with the names of Uyghur dissidents who planned to testify against Beijing’s human rights abuses.

According to Reilly, the Chinese government was then able to pressure these dissidents out of testifying by threatening, arresting, and torturing their family members. One of the dissidents identified to China by the U.N. reportedly died in detention.

Reilly, a trained human rights lawyer with dual British-Irish citizenship, told Le Monde she went to work for the U.N. human rights office about ten years ago. In 2013, she received an email from Chinese diplomats in Geneva asking UNHCR to do Beijing a “favor” by confirming personal information about “anti-government Chinese separatists” who were petitioning to address the U.N.

The list of 13 names forwarded to Reilly and other U.N. staffers included famed blind dissident Chen Guangcheng, who escaped to the United States and [remains](https://www.breitbart.com/asia/2020/08/27/chinese-media-inviting-blind-activist-to-rnc-shows-trump-turned-party-into-street-gang/) an indomitable critic of the Chinese government; [Wang Dan](https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/30-years-after-tiananmen-the-meaning-of-june-4th/), a student leader in the 1989 Tiananmen Square movement; and [Dolkun Issa](https://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2021/05/19/report-chinas-destruction-uyghur-people-first-technology-enabled-genocide/), a prominent Uyghur activist and current president of the World Uyghur Congress.

Reilly told Le Monde the Chinese government has made similar requests for information about Uyghurs and other dissidents scheduled to address UNHCR over the years – and the U.N. human rights office routinely gives China the information it wants, even though the U.N.’s rules forbid such collusion.

Reilly said she personally objected to giving China information about dissidents, but her objections were overruled by her superiors, who felt refusing the demands would “exacerbate the Chinese mistrust against us.”

[Newsweek](https://www.newsweek.com/united-nations-giving-names-uyghur-dissidents-china-opinion-1649060) noted that various U.N. officials have alternately confirmed this “indefensible practice” and denied it. In 2017, for example, UNHCR officials admitted they were giving the names of Uyghur activists to China, but then insisted they would never do such a thing only a month later, sneering that allegations to the contrary were “extreme right-wing” propaganda – and then admitted they were doing it again, five months later.

Reilly told Le Monde her career has suffered tremendously because she clashed with her superiors over appeasing China and she fully expected to suffer reprisals for giving her interview, even though she was officially granted whistleblower protection by U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in 2020.

In July 2020, Reilly [exposed](https://www.foxnews.com/politics/un-investigator-americans-whistleblower) the transcript of an undercover recording that caught U.N. internal investigators treating whistleblower complaints like a joke and blowing off complaints of retaliation against staffers who spoke up. Reilly sent the transcript to then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and advised the Trump administration to cut U.N. funding by 15 percent for failure to comply with whistleblower protection policies.

“I am collateral damage, and senior managers are now apparently so utterly devoid of ethics that they genuinely do not understand why I would prioritize the lives of human beings over my pay and benefits,” she [told](https://www.foxnews.com/world/whistleblower-claims-un-is-working-with-china-as-she-faces-losing-her-protection)Fox News in June 2021.

Reilly said she was swiftly fired after her interview with Le Monde at the end of October, among other reasons because she was talking to media outlets like Fox News and communicating improperly with officials of the United States and other U.N. member nations.

“The U.N. accuses me only of disobeying an order to be silent. I am not accused of lying. I had a duty as a human being, let alone as a Human Rights Officer, to tell the press when telling my superiors and governments had no impact. To be silent in the face of genocide is to stand with the oppressor. I will leave that to the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights,” she [told](https://www.foxnews.com/world/un-whistleblower-fired-china-blackburn)Fox News on Tuesday.

Reilly said she was disappointed the U.S., British, and Irish governments did not get involved in her case, even after she told them how UNHCR was colluding with China.

“All any government ever did was simply ask U.N. managers about their relationship with China and note down the answer. The U.N. first told them no names of dissidents were ever handed over, then that it was ongoing, then that it had stopped years previously. No government ever even challenged the inconsistency, let alone challenging the U.N. with the evidence I gave them that handing names to China is still policy,” she said.

“Democracies sit by and do nothing, claiming they need to respect an independence of the U.N. that simply does not exist,” she said, directly accusing China of subverting and dominating the United Nations.

“When the High Commissioner for Human Rights and Secretary-General are silent on the largest network of concentration camps since the Nazis, it’s not because they are working on back-room diplomacy. It’s because China has been the new paymaster for some time,” she charged.

“Democracies need to step up and make the U.N. respect its own charter before it is too late. Whistleblowers are their only source of real information, and who will dare speak up now?” she asked.

Some reports indicate U.N. officials are suddenly insisting Reilly did not have whistleblower protection, even though United Nations documents from 2020 explicitly [recommended](https://whistleblowingnetwork.org/News-Events/News/News-Archive/Civil-Society-Statement-on-the-firing-of-UN-human) she should be “protected from any adverse personnel action.”

Reilly used her Twitter account to promise she would continue her crusade for reform and accountability at the United Nations. On Tuesday, she noted she was treated more harshly than U.N. employees embroiled in massive corruption and [sexual abuse scandals](https://www.breitbart.com/africa/2021/10/29/report-e-u-suspends-w-h-o-funding-after-congo-sex-abuse-scandal/):

Reilly [added](https://twitter.com/EmmaReillyTweet/status/1463118394128052224) that some of the people ratted out to China by U.N. employees are American citizens, and offered to testify before Congress on the subject. According to Fox News, her allegations have captured the attention of Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), a determined critic of China’s influence over the United Nations.

“The international community can no longer turn a blind eye to Beijing’s egregious abuse. No whistleblower should be fired for exposing how the U.N. is aiding Communist China’s exploitation and abuse of the Muslim Uyghurs,” Blackburn said.

In a [combative email](https://twitter.com/EmmaReillyTweet/status/1462852397500448773) to Guterres and U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michele Bachelet on Monday, Reilly invited U.N. officials to sue her if they think they can prove anything she told Le Monde is false.

She threw in some digs at the United Nations for its lamentable data security practices, such as using the Survey Monkey database to store the names of dissidents who have good reason to fear their lives are in danger.

“Even when I gave you the name of a person on China’s list who subsequently returned to China and died in a concentration camp, you still refused to meet me. I am disappointed that all it took for you to ignore complicity in genocide was sexist rumors that I am crazy, spread by the man I reported, with whom you have been all too happy to meet regularly,” Reilly told Guterres and Bachelet.