UN said to be poised to ax whistleblower for exposing Chinese/UN wrongdoing

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<https://www.foxnews.com/world/un-whistleblower-exposing-chinese-un-wrongdoing>

A group representing over 30 whistleblower and anti-corruption groups around the world is urging the [United Nations](https://www.foxnews.com/category/world/united-nations) secretary-general to protect Emma Reilly, a U.N. human rights lawyer who risked her career by reporting undue [Chinese](https://www.foxnews.com/category/world/world-regions/china) influence at the U.N.

Reilly fears she will be fired for her efforts. She alerted her bosses at the U.N. Human Rights office that – at the request of [China](https://www.foxnews.com/category/world/world-regions/china) – her office handed over [names of dissidents who were coming to the U.N. Human Rights Council](https://www.foxnews.com/world/un-human-rights-office-china-dissidents)(UNHRC) in Switzerland, including some U.S. citizens.

Reilly said this resulted in pressure from Beijing on the dissidents not to make the trip. She said that included pressuring their families which in some cases resulted in arrests, torture and, in one case, a person was reported to have died in detention.

Last week, a letter demanding action was sent to U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres from Whistleblowing International Network (WIN) that called on him "to immediately suspend any further action being taken against" Reilly.

The [letter](https://whistleblowingnetwork.org/WIN/media/pdfs/Open-letter-for-UN-SG-Reilly-17-08-2021.pdf) also noted that, "It is essential that the United Nations – as the international upholder of human rights globally - take responsibility for any failure to protect human rights defenders, and we call for a full, credible, and independent investigation of Ms. Reilly’s original concerns about the potentially harmful consequences of OHCHR (Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights) staff sharing names of vulnerable human rights activists with the Chinese authorities."

Anna Myers, the executive director of WIN, told Fox News that, "It is a classic case of trying to get rid of a ‘problematic employee’ without any regard for the public interest issues at stake or for the truly damaging impact it has on U.N.’s credibility and reputation as an upholder of human rights.

"The current internal system of justice at the United Nations does not work to protect UN staff who report wrongdoing or serious risks of harm," Myers said. "It does not have any of the basic elements that would give anyone a fighting chance to survive. This is shameful and must change."

Stephane Dujarric, the spokesman for the secretary-general, would not comment on whether Reilly was going to be fired for her efforts.

"There is an ongoing confidential internal process underway," he told Fox News. "In order to respect the confidentiality of any internal process and the rights of Ms. Reilly, we are not at liberty to comment."

Dujarric confirmed that the letter sent by WIN had been received and a response was sent, but would not confirm if his boss had read it.

On the issue of Reilly’s whistleblower status being rescinded, the spokesman claimed that "Ms. Reilly has not been recognized as a whistleblower regarding the practices of which she has complained."

"From his first days in office, the secretary-general has worked to strengthen the organization’s whistle-blower policy," Dujarric said. "He will continue to make adjustments and improvements as necessary."

Reilly fired back that the U.N. was simply protecting itself and its bureaucracy in her case.

"As the U.N. management is fully aware, I was recognized as a whistleblower in July 2020 regarding my reports of the U.N. Human Rights Office handing names to the Chinese Communist Party. I already published that finding in response to this latest U.N. lie," she wrote, adding a link to [the findings.](https://unintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Ethics-finding-2020-redacted.pdf)

"U.N. rules require an investigation at that point," she continued. "That investigation would have been very embarrassing for the U.N. managers who argue in court that a better relationship with Beijing is worth sacrificing human rights activists and their families and ignoring rules set by member states."

She added that, "The very U.N. managers who have led the cover-up for almost a decade decided to break their own rules again and ‘investigate’ me for speaking publicly. I am not accused of lying, because there is no dispute on the facts – the U.N. Human Rights Office says it can, against the written rules set by member states, secretly hand names of human rights activists to China. All I have ever asked for is an external, independent investigation. If the UN has nothing to hide, why has it spent over 3 million dollars resisting that?

Reilly concluded, "I have repeatedly, publicly stated that I have no problem with the UN commenting publicly on any aspect of my case - I have nothing to hide, while UN managers hide behind interminable, bureaucratic processes to justify a policy that amounts to complicity in genocide."

In a statement to Fox News, U.S. Sen. Marsha Blackburn, R.-Tenn., said it was "sadly not surprising to hear that the Chinese Communist Party targeted, silenced and abused dissidents."

"The United Nations is increasingly influenced by authoritarian regimes like Communist China. Congress must act and root out malign influence at the United Nations, starting with Beijing. I introduced the United Nations Transparency and Accountability Act to strengthen America’s influence as a key U.N. member nation and expose the threat adversarial countries pose to international organizations."

A U.S. Mission to the United Nations (USUN) spokesperson indicated to Fox News that they would wait on a U.N. decision.

"We are aware of claims by Emma Reilly pertaining to her own status under the U.N.’s personnel rules," they said. "We believe any such issue should be first be addressed within U.N. venues before we comment."

Reilly has written letters to the USUN Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield asking for her to intervene but so far, she said, to no avail.

The U.S. spokesperson seemed at odds with Reilly’s claims.

"Until 2015, the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) allowed U.N. Member States to request information regarding their nationals who might be attending U.N. meetings. As we understand it, this practice was not formally codified by OHCHR and confirmation of attendance by NGOs or human rights defenders was only disclosed if the information was already in the public domain," the spokesperson said. "We understand this practice ceased when new rules were put into place in 2015, and we have no reason to believe that is not the case."

Reilly took issue with the statement, saying that, "Nobody would be more delighted than me if my 2013 reports had worked and this stopped in 2015. But when my case was first made public in 2017, the U.N. admitted the policy continued. In 2019, the U.N. said in court this is still policy. The U.N. even claimed in court a right to lie to both member states and the press. Internal documents show Beijing still knows who is coming to U.N. human rights meetings. If the U.N. is telling the truth this time, why have they not changed their court position, and why will they not allow investigation?"

Edward Flaherty an American lawyer who is based in Switzerland and has represented several U.N. whistleblowers, not including Emma Reilly, told Fox News that, "If the UN does ultimately fire Ms. Reilly, this will be a test as to whether the U.S. government really means what successive Administrations have claimed about their support for an effective whistleblower protection in the UN under Sec 7048. If the U.S. won't protect Ms. Reilly for disclosing U.N. complicity in China's human rights abuses by handing names of dissidents (some of whom were U.S. citizens) to China, what would make them act?"

Flaherty concluded, "Once again, its outdated immunity seems set to result in complete impunity on the part of the U.N., at least in the case of Ms. Reilly."

The USUN spokesperson told Fox News that, "The United States is committed to advocating for human rights defenders to enjoy freedom of expression and access to relevant and appropriate UN facilities and events. Moreover, the United States places the utmost importance on ensuring protections ​against retaliation in the U.N. and other international organizations. We remain committed to working with other countries and civil society organizations to promote accountability and transparency in the U.N. system."