

Tibettruth

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Mr Sergio Mujica
ISO Secretary-General
International Organization for Standardization
ISO Central Secretariat
BIBC II
Chemin de Blandonnet 8
CP 4011214 Vernier,
Geneva
Switzerland

Dear Sir,

We've been advised that the *International Organization for Standardization (ISO)* has responsibility for Regional Codes as applying to the classification of *Emoji country flags*, used across social media.

These symbols enable users to include in their communications flags, although as this correspondence will show not all peoples and territories are favored with an emoji of their cultural or national emblem. No doubt there's political reasons operating which maybe the cause, of what some have criticized as a form of censorship, that effectively denies people a freedom-of-choice or expression.

From what we've been given to understand ISO has produced a zonal system and conferred coding for each region, which the authorizing authority for emojis, the *Unicode Consortium*, follows in approving and awarding emoji flags. For example people around the world can, should they choose to, include in their tweets or Facebook posts, an emoji flag of Western Sahara or Palestinian Territories. These we gather have by ISO been given the following codes ISO 3166-1 (PS and EH respectively). Which we are assured confer the highest level of the hierarchy in the context of this particular standard.

However, presently people around the digital world are not allowed the same freedom to include in their social-media communications an emoji Tibetan flag. Now ultimately it would seem that your organization has significant responsibility for this unfortunate omission, since Tibet, has we are advised, been placed within region code CN-54. So if the Tibetan emblem was approved as an emoji it would do so, as a subdivision of the People's Republic of China!

Now that as you may realize would not be possible and meet objection. There appears to be a double-standard at work here though, which on one hand unjustly (and in terms of Tibet's legal status) consigns Tibet as a part of China. While bestowing upon Western Sahara and the Palestinian Territories a distinct code.

This suggests that ISO in reaching a decision on such coding has chosen not to recognize Israeli claims on jurisdiction over Palestinian lands. This naturally raises the question why Chinese claims have been given credence? Moreover the International Organization for Standardization appears to have ignored the reality that since August 2015 as of August 2015, the United Nations Security Council regards Palestine as a non-sovereign entity.

Now as an activist network supporting human rights and freedoms for oppressed peoples and territories we welcome your decision to recognize the Palestinian Territories as a distinct entity. The problem is that while reaching that particular judgement you interpret Tibet as a sub-division of China. In making such conclusions there is a worrying inconsistency operating. Ignoring Israeli claims over Palestinian lands or Algerian and Moroccan assertions with respect to Western Sahara and granting those territories specific designations. Yet seemingly without question accepting the fact-free claims of China's regime over Tibet and so ultimately making it highly difficult for the approval of an emoji of the Tibetan flag. How? You may justly ask.

Well the *Unicode Consortium*, presumably to avoid political issues, follows obediently the codes which ISO has put in place. What they fail to realize though is that your organization in formalizing the regional coding distinctions to Western Sahara and Palestinian Territories has in effect *made a political decision*. Furthermore, in so doing invited controversy, and at the same time facilitated the censorship of Tibet as a recognizable and separate territory.

The consequences of ISO's present classifications in regard to regional coding means that over 100, 000 Tibetans in exile are denied the choice to include in their tweets and messages across social media, an emoji of their nation's emblem. Inside occupied Tibet anyone found displaying or posting Tibet's flag faces jail, torture and forced labor. Had they the freedom to do so, then the International Organization for Standardization may be assured that (among the nearly six million Tibetans there) of those using cell phones an emoji of the Snow Lion flag would be hugely popular.

You may be aware that Tibet attracts considerable international concern and interest around the world, we are directly exposed to such solidarity via our social-media accounts. It is deeply encouraging to note such support and there's is no question of the critical role played by those digital platforms in increasing exposure of the plight of the Tibetan people. To those who value the ancient and profoundly rich culture of Tibet, or who wish to express their support for Tibet, being able to post messages and information across the internet is invaluable.

Particularly in reaching out to people who have little knowledge about the issue. Many do not realize Tibet's legal status within international law is that of an independent nation under an illegal occupation. Whose people have a right to Self-Determination as recognized by United Nations Resolutions UN General Assembly Resolution 1723 (XVI) New York, December 20, 1961.

Nor that it enjoyed for centuries all the characteristics of a sovereign country, including self-government, a currency, postal service, treaties with neighboring countries, and possessing a distinct language and culture. Given these factors we are baffled why your organization has extended recognition to territories such as Palestine and Western Sahara yet chooses to regard Tibet as a component of China.

As consumers and users of social-media we believe that we have a stake in how standards are applied and developed, especially when as in this case there are concerns of censorship and exclusion. We ask, with regard to this matter, if our needs and those of the Tibetan Diaspora, along with people around the world supportive and concerned about Tibet, are being met?

No doubt there is a process within your organization for review and reassessment concerning existing standards, be they through technical committee examination or annual conference. That being so we would urge the International Organization for Standardization to allow a reassessment and discussion among its members to consider conferring upon Tibet a distinct code, similar to that enjoyed by the Palestinian Territories and Western Sahara.

Such an action would be greatly welcomed by Tibetans and those who stand with justice, human rights and freedom-of-expression.

We hope that you will give serious and prompt consideration of this communication and look forward to what is sincerely hoped shall prove and helpful and positive response.

Thank you

Admin

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