

Topline

Boston Celtics center Enes Kanter criticized the Chinese government again on social media Friday, calling President Xi Jinping the “heartless dictator of China” for the country’s treatment of the Uyghur people, a day after the Chinese tech giant Tencent said it would stop streaming Celtics games in China following Kanter’s call for freedom for Tibet and criticism of Xi earlier in the week.

Boston Celtics center Enes Kanter, right, has been an outspoken against the Chiense government this ... [+] week. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Key Facts

Kanter called out the “humans rights violations” committed by the Chinese government against the Muslim Uyghur population of the Xinjiang region of northwestern China in a video he [posted](#) on Twitter and called on other Muslim athletes and leaders to do the same.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [said](#) in April China has committed “acts of genocide” against the Uyghurs, an assessment that concurred with the results of an [independent investigation](#) released in March into China’s actions in Xinjiang.

Kanter’s campaign against Xi and the Chinese government began Wednesday, when he wore [shoes](#) with “Free Tibet” on them and spoke out against the government’s treatment of the Tibetan people in another Twitter [video](#).

In response to Kanter’s actions, Tencent, the Chinese streaming service that airs NBA games in the country, [pulled](#) all Celtics games from its service.

Crucial Quote

Kanter said in Friday’s video, “The Chinese government has sent Uyghurs, along with Kazakhs, Tajiks and other Muslim groups to concentration camps for...anything that does not align with the Chinese Communist Party’s agena.... It is so disappointing that the governments and leaders of Muslim-majority countries are staying silent while my Muslim brothers and sisters are getting killed, raped and tortured.”

Key Background

The relationship between the Chinese government and the NBA has been [rocky](#) for the past few years. In 2019, NBA games were removed from CCTV, Chinese state-run television, after then-Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey called out the government's oppressive tactics. Games continued to stream on Tencent, though Morey's current team, the Philadelphia 76ers, are banned along with the Celtics. Though the NBA has remained quiet on Kanter's comments this week, a U.S. State Department spokesperson backed Kanter, telling [Reuters](#), "The United States is deeply concerned by [China]'s actions against the National Basketball Association for statements one player made regarding Tibet.... We value freedom of expression and support anyone who exercises that right."

Further Reading

[New NBA China Controversy: Tencent Drops Celtics Games After Kanter Calls Jinping 'Brutal Dictator' \(Forbes\)](#)

Source: [NBA's Enes Kanter Speaks Out Against Chinese Government Again, Blasting Treatment Of Uyghurs](#)