



# Tibet News

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The Newsletter of the **Tibet Information Office** for Australia, New Zealand & South East Asia

## UN urges China to urgently address longstanding grievances of Tibetans

**GENEVA, 2 November 2012:** UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER for Human Rights Navi Pillay on Friday urged Chinese authorities to promptly address the longstanding grievances that have led to an alarming escalation in desperate forms of protest, including self-immolations, in Tibetan areas.

The UN human rights chief said she was disturbed by “continuing allegations of violence against Tibetans seeking to exercise their fundamental human rights of freedom of expression, association and religion,” and pointed to “reports of detentions and disappearances, of excessive use of force against peaceful demonstrators, and curbs on the cultural rights of Tibetans.”

Cases have included a 17-year-old girl who was reportedly severely beaten and sentenced to three years in prison for distributing flyers calling for Tibet’s freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama. Others have been sentenced to between four and seven years in prison for writing essays, making films or distributing photos of events in Tibet outside China. Serious concerns have been raised about fair

trial standards, and the torture and ill-treatment of detainees.

“I have had several exchanges with the Chinese Government on these issues. But more needs to be done to protect human rights and prevent violations,” Pillay said. “I call on the Government to respect the rights to peaceful assembly and expression, and to release all individuals detained for merely exercising these universal rights.”

The High Commissioner also appealed to Tibetans to refrain from resorting to extreme forms of protest, such as self-immolation, and urged community and religious leaders to use their influence to help stop this tragic loss of life.

“I recognise Tibetans’ intense sense of frustration and despair which has led them to resort to such extreme means,” she said, “but there are other ways to make those feelings clear. The Government also needs to recognise this, and permit Tibetans to express their feelings without fear of retribution.”

The High Commissioner urged the Government, as a confidence-building measure, to allow independent and impartial



*UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay addressing the general assembly in New York, 24 October 2012.*

monitors to visit and assess the actual conditions on the ground, and to lift restrictions on media access to the region. She noted that there are 12 outstanding requests for official visits to China by UN Special Rapporteurs on various human rights

*continued page 2*

## Sino-Tibetan Dialogue Conference held in Sydney

**SYDNEY:** A TWO-DAY INTERNATIONAL Sino-Tibetan Dialogue Conference was held from 29 to 30 December, 2012 at Bankstown Sports Club, NSW.

About 100 Tibetan and Chinese scholars, human rights activists, media and students from the US, Europe, Taiwan, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Australia and India participated in the conference. The conference was organized by the Sino-Tibet Study Group and the New York and Chinese-Tibetan Friendship Association, Sydney. Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in-Exile was the chief guest.

Besides a message sent to the conference expressly from His Holiness the Dalai Lama—at the close of the conference, a Sydney Declaration was announced that supported the

legitimate rights of the Tibetan people for independence and appreciated His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach to resolve the issue of Tibet.

The declaration blamed the Chinese government for the grim human rights situation in Tibet, which led to 95 self-immolations since 2009 and expressed solidarity with the Tibetans fighting for their human rights. Furthermore, it supported the international communities’ call upon the Chinese government to allow an impartial international fact finding mission to the Tibetan areas where self-immolations have taken place. The declaration also called on the Chinese government to release all political prisoners including the Panchen Lama, recognized by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Liu Xiao Bo. ■



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*Photo right: Sonam Dagpo, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Representative with Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in-Exile, Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, offered flowers by Chinese children from overseas. Zhang Xiaohui photography*



# Tibet News

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**Address:**

8/13 Napier Close, Deakin  
ACT 2600 Australia

**Phone:** 61-2-6285-4046

**Fax:** 61-2-6282-4301

**Email:** tiboff@bigpond.com

**Website:** www.tibetoffice.com.au

**Representative of HH the Dalai Lama:**  
Sonam N. Dagpo

**Secretary:**

Ngodup Gyaltzen Udak

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Editors: Sonam N. Dagpo  
and Karen Collier

Production: Karen Collier

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issues, including one by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief. During the Universal Periodic Review of China's human rights record before the UN Human Rights Council, the State pledged to step up cooperation with Special Procedures. Pillay called on the Government to facilitate their access.

"Social stability in Tibet will never be achieved through heavy security measures and suppression of human rights," she said. "Deep underlying issues need to be addressed, and I call on the Government to seriously consider the recommendations made to it by various international human rights bodies, as well as to avail itself of the expert advice being offered by the UN's independent experts on human rights."

Among the recommendations made by international human rights bodies to the Government of China on Tibet are the following:

- UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, recommended a suspension of non-voluntary resettlement of nomadic herders, who make up the majority of the Tibetan population, and called for a

meaningful consultation.

- The UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CERD) recommended to China that any policies or incentives offered that may result in a substantial alteration of the demographic composition of autonomous minority areas be reviewed. CERD also recommended that the State party carefully consider the root causes of the unrest in March 2008, including inter-ethnic violence, and the reasons why the situation escalated.

- The UN Committee Against Torture in November 2008 recommended that China conduct a thorough and independent inquiry into events surrounding the protests in March 2008, including the reported excessive use of force against peaceful demonstrators, notably monks, in Kardze county, Ngaba county, and Lhasa; and into allegations of torture and ill-treatment against those arrested and detained.

"My office also stands ready to assist constructively on these issues in the region and promoting best practices from around the world with regard to protection of minorities," Pillay added. ■

## Int'l support groups vow to strengthen global movement to end crisis in Tibet

18 November, 2012

**DHARAMSHALA:** WITH NO LET UP IN THE TRAGIC SELF-IMMOLATIONS by Tibetans, the international Tibet Support Groups have pledged to mobilise the international community to press the Chinese government to find a lasting and mutually-agreeable solution to the problem of Tibet.

Over 200 members of the Tibet Support Groups (TSG), including 20 Chinese delegates, from 43 countries carried out extensive discussions to find ways to end the self-immolation crisis in Tibet during their three-day special meeting in Dharamsala, which concluded on Sunday.

The TSG members expressed solidarity with Tibetans inside Tibet for their unwavering determination and commitment to non-violence in resisting China's policies to undermine Tibet's culture, language and religion.

They said the responsibility for this crisis lies with China's past leaders and their failed policies over the last 60 years. Social and economic marginalisation of Tibetans in their own land are contributing factors in the escalation of self-immolations and must be urgently addressed, they added.



*Kalon Dicki Choyang of the Central Tibetan Administration's Department of Information & International Relations. Dharamsala, 18 November 2012/Photo by Drubgyu Nyima/TibetNet*

They called on China's new leaders to take immediate steps to address the legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people, recognising that a peaceful resolution is in the best interests of both the Tibetans and the Chinese people.

They urged the governments take urgent and coordinated action at the United Nations and in other international fora to press China to change its failed policies in Tibet.

"We renew our commitment to work together and in cooperation with Tibetan organisations and Chinese human rights defenders around the world in pursuit of a political solution to the Tibet issue consistent with international human rights standards," the TSG members said. ■

# “Devotion for the Tibetan cause is beyond Limit”

**A Tribute to Mr. Peter Rex Grogan (1934 - 2012)**

**SYDNEY:** THE RECENT PASSING OF MR. PETER GROGAN on 11 November 2012, is a great loss to a wide network of friends, colleagues and professionals spanning many communities, including the Australian legal community, the Tibetan community in Australia and beyond. A thanksgiving service was held for Mr. Grogan at St Swithun’s Anglican Church in Pymble on 16 November.

A former barrister since 1961, Mr. Grogan became Judge of the NSW District Court in 1989. He had been interested in human rights affairs both domestically and internationally, particularly with respect to Tibet. On becoming a judge, Peter once stated, “it became more difficult to be as active in some ways, except in respect of certain activities,” adding his professional practice was “something done in conjunction with my interest in human rights.”

Since 1956, Peter had been involved with *The International Commission of Jurists*. Founded in Geneva in 1952, The ICJ is one of the oldest human rights organisations in the world, working heavily in international standard setting. A Tibet Committee of the Australian

Section (AICJ) was formed under the chairmanship of Mr. Grogan in 1958.

In 1959, ICJ published the landmark report *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law*, which considered violations of human rights by the People’s Republic of China. It drew the world’s attention to the situation in Tibet following the Chinese invasion in 1950, followed by the reports *Tibet and the Chinese People’s Republic* in 1960 and *Tibet: Human Rights and the Rule of Law* in 1997.

There has been a close relationship between His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and members of the Australian Section of ICJ. In a letter dated 15 February 1989 to The Hon. Justice Michael Kirby, HH the Dalai Lama wrote, “As for Mr. and Mrs. Grogan, our gratitude and the concern and devotion for the Tibetan cause, is beyond limit.”

The Dalai Lama said the initial ICJ report was one of the first efforts of an international organization to draw the tragedy of the Tibetan people to international attention. Mr. Grogan was the honorary assistant Secretary General of ICJ in 1956 and President of the NSW branch of the AICJ. He remained on the Council of the ICJ up until his passing. In the lead up to a major

conference in London in 1993, and attended by international lawyers, Peter was Chairman of the Australian Working Group Committee, which was concerned with Tibet’s self-determination issues.

In 1956, Peter wrote to *The Sydney Morning Herald* advocating a national Bill of Rights. From 2005-2008, he served as the Chancellor of the Anglican Sydney Diocese and besides holding degrees in Arts, Law and Economics, on his retirement, Peter spent a year studying at Moore Theological College (Dip B&M) and with great spirit in 2008—competed in the *World Masters Games* in swimming.

Peter is survived by his wife Mrs. Valerie Grogan AM, and by his daughter Amanda and grandchildren.

TIO expresses deepest condolences for the loss of a dear friend, extending respect for Mr. Grogan’s unwavering commitment, advocating the interests of the Tibetan people throughout his lifetime. ■



*Report by Karen Collier*

## First Kalachakra world peace stupa inaugurated in Australia



**29 October, 2012**

THE KALACHAKRA WORLD PEACE STUPA was opened to the public at a solemn ceremony at the Crystal Castle, Mullumbimby near Byron Bay in Australia on 27 October.

The auspicious ceremony began with the welcome to the country by the owners of the land and prayers by the Gyuto monks in front of a huge stone statue of Lord Buddha. His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s photo was taken in a procession led by the Gyuto monks and placed on the throne in front of the newly constructed stupa.

Mr Sonam Norbu Dagpo, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for Australia, New

Zealand and South East Asia and chief guest of the occasion offered (Mendrel) long life offerings and the Gyuto monks chanted long life prayer for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The Gyuto monks then consecrated the stupa.

Mr Naren King, the Director of the Crystal Castle spoke on the history of the construction of the stupa. He and his wife Sono though not Buddhist, visited Dharamsala in 2010 and met Woesser Rinpoche who through his divination advised them to construct a Kalachakra stupa. They had an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Sakya Gongma Rinpoche, Gaden Tri Rinpoche and others and received blessings for their project. The 8-metre Kalachakra Stupa was built in accordance with Tibetan tradition under the guidance and supervision of the Gyuto monks. He said that the stupa was filled with many

sacred relics and scriptures.

Mr Sonam Dagpo unveiled the Kalachakra World Peace Stupa which is dedicated “to love and peace for all beings and to the freedom for the Tibetan people and to their sacrifice in the name of peace.” He expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the Crystal Castle and its directors Naren King and his wife Sono for dedicating the stupa to the peaceful struggle of the Tibetans for the preservation of their religion and culture.

More than 1, 500 people from all over Australia and New Zealand attended the ceremony. It is said that the first Kalachakra stupa was constructed in Amaravati in India where Buddha gave the first Kalachakra teachings. There are very few Kalachakra stupas in the world today and this is the first one in the Southern Hemisphere. ■

## Tibetans in Australia hold rally in solidarity with Tibet on Human Rights Day

**11 December, 2012**

**CANBERRA:** TIBETANS AND SUPPORTERS ALL OVER THE WORLD observed 10th December as the Global Tibet Solidarity Day with different programs and events. In Canberra Tibetans and Tibet supporters on Monday gathered in the city centre of Canberra, Australia, in solidarity with the Tibetans inside Tibet as well as to raise awareness regarding the current wave of self-immolations in Tibet.

Mr Sonam Dagpo, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, spoke on the present human rights situation in Tibet including the self-immolation of 95 Tibetans since 2009.

Prof. John Powers from the Australian National University, who told of his personal account of his recent visit to Tibet and observed the heavy militarisation of Tibet.

Mr Fang Yuan, Chairman of the Chinese Labour party, expressed hope that the new Chinese leader Xi Jiping would be open-minded like his father who befriend His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He was optimistic that His Holiness the Dalai Lama would be able to return to Tibet and there would be no more Tibetans in exile and self-immolations.

Tibetans and supporters raised slogans and rallied from the city centre towards the Chinese embassy, where prayers were said for the



self-immolators and their families and slogans were raised against the repressive actions of the Chinese government against the Tibetans.

The Tibetan community of Canberra sent memoranda to the UN Secretary General Ban ki-moon and the Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard. Similar protest rallies were held by the Tibetan communities and supporters in different cities of Australia and New Zealand. ■

# China's ethnic assimilation policy will deepen Tibetan resentment: US Congress Report

12 October, 2012

**DHARAMSHALA:** A US CONGRESSIONAL REPORT ON CHINA has warned that any attempts by the Chinese government, as advocated by a key communist party official earlier this year, to abrogate ethnic minority status could adversely affect the Tibetan people's cultural and linguistic identity and further deepen their resentment against the government.

The bipartisan Congressional-Executive Commission on China, in its 2012 Annual Report on developments in human rights and rule of law in China, released Wednesday, said: "This past year, the Chinese Communist Party and government increased pressure on and interference with the Tibetan people's aspiration to preserve the viability and vibrancy of their

culture and language. Zhu Weiqun, UFWD Executive Deputy Head and Director of the Party's General Office of the Central Coordinating Group for Tibet Affairs, wrote in a February 13, 2012, article that he favors ending or changing some policies that have the potential to benefit ethnic minority cultures. His views, if implemented, could adversely affect the Tibetan people's cultural and linguistic identity and further deepen resentment against the government."

The report said the trend of self-immolation incidents in Tibet was concurrent with the increasing Chinese government measures to repress and control core elements of Tibetan culture, including the Tibetan Buddhist religion and monastic institutions, and with the China-

Dalai Lama dialogue's failure to achieve any sign of progress.

"The [Communist] Party and government have not indicated any willingness to consider Tibetan grievances in a constructive manner and to hold themselves accountable for Tibetan rejection of Chinese policies, and handled the crisis as a threat to state security and social stability instead of as a policy failure," the report added.

The report also documented sustained protests by Tibetans against the Chinese government's development policies affecting Tibet's linguistic identity and natural environment.

It said, as of 1 September 2012, there are 1,312 Tibetan political prisoners detained on or after 10 March 2008. ■

## Chair of EU Human Rights subcommittee criticises China on worsening human rights situation in Tibet

6 November, 2012

**DHARAMSHALA:** THE CHAIR OF THE EU HUMAN RIGHTS Subcommittee of the European Parliament, Barbara Lochbihler, has criticised the Chinese government over the human rights situation in Tibet. Ms Lochbihler urged Beijing to resume dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama towards finding a lasting solution to the issue of Tibet. She said there should be a systematic change in the annual EU-China human rights dialogue to make it more result-oriented.

The situation in Tibet continues to remain grim as more than 63 Tibetans have self-immolated since 2009 in protest against the Chinese government's repressive rule. The self-immolators have called for freedom for Tibetans and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The Central Tibetan Administration has repeatedly appealed to the Tibetans inside Tibet not to take drastic actions. Nevertheless, whenever he has the opportunity, His Holiness will continue to share his concerns about this issue in the hope that there will be a positive outcome. ■



Barbara Lochbihler, chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights. (Photo:Europarl)

## Rare footage shows extreme measures of Tibetan protestors

9 October, 2012

**Australian Broadcasting Corporation**



IN THE REMOTEST REGIONS OF CHINA, inhabited by the country's Tibetan minority, an appalling uprising is under way. In the past year more than 50 monks have died after setting themselves on fire to protest against government repression. Their uprising is mostly hidden from public view because journalists and TV cameras are usually barred from visiting either the Tibetan Autonomous Region or the neighbouring provinces.

But China correspondent Stephen McDonnell travelled undercover to western China to prepare this report. And a warning: this story contains images of self-immolation. ■

*Leigh Sales, Presenter ABC / Report by Stephen McDonnell.*

**See full report at:**

<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2012/s3607238.htm>

Self-immolation in Tibet/ABC News

## US Government urges Beijing to hold unconditional dialogue with Tibetan leadership to solve Tibet problem

6 December, 2012

**DHARAMSHALA:** EXPRESSING DEEP CONCERN AND SADNESS over the accelerating self-immolations by Tibetans inside Tibet, a top US government official on Thursday urged the China to address its policies in Tibet that are pushing Tibetans to burn themselves to death in protest and to engage in dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives without preconditions.

Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Maria Otero said: "The United States is deeply concerned and saddened by the continuing violence in Tibetan areas of China and the increasing frequency of self-immolations by Tibetans. Chinese authorities have responded to these tragic incidents with measures that tighten

already strict controls on freedoms of religion, expression, assembly and association of Tibetans. Official rhetoric that denigrates the Tibetan language, the Dalai Lama, and those who have self-immolated has further exacerbated tensions."

"Senior U.S. officials have directly raised the issue of Tibetan self-immolations with their Chinese government counterparts. The U.S. Government has consistently urged the Chinese government to address policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions. These policies include increasingly severe government controls on Tibetan Buddhist religious practice and monastic institutions; education practices that undermine the preservation of Tibetan language; intensive surveillance, arbitrary detentions and

disappearances of Tibetans, including youth and Tibetan intellectual and cultural leaders; escalating restrictions on news, media and communications; and the use of force against Tibetans seeking peacefully to exercise their universal human rights.

"We call on the Chinese Government to permit Tibetans to express their grievances freely, publicly, peacefully, and without fear of retribution. We hope that the tragic acts of self-immolation end. We call on China's leaders to allow journalists, diplomats and other observers unrestricted access to China's Tibetan areas. We call on the Chinese Government to Chinese government to address policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions," Ms Otero said. ■



US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Maria Otero/Photo Credit:everystockphoto

## Sikyong Lobsang Sangay calls on China and international bodies to visit Dharamsala



8 November, 2012  
PRESS RELEASE

### 6 more Tibetans self-immolate in Tibet

THE KASHAG CONDEMNS CHINA'S DISMISSAL of the recent UN statement on Tibet as interference in its internal affairs, and its allegations that the Tibetan leadership is behind the current protests in Tibet. "The blame and solution for the present tragedy in Tibet lies entirely with Beijing. We welcome representatives of the Chinese government as well as that of any independent international body to investigate these allegations by visiting our offices in Dharamsala, India" states Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the democratically-elected leader of the Tibetan people and political successor to His Holiness the

Dalai Lama of Tibet.

We applaud, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay's, urging to the Chinese government to "promptly address the longstanding grievances that have led to an alarming escalation in desperate forms of protest, including self-immolations, in Tibetan areas." As noted by Pillay, China should accept "the 12 outstanding requests for official visits to China by UN Special Rapporteurs on various human rights issues." Like Hon. Gary Locke, U.S. Ambassador to China, we urge other ambassadors and members of the press to visit Tibetan areas and investigate the present human rights situation.

Six more Tibetans set themselves on fire across Tibet since Wednesday, November 7th,

taking the total number of self-immolations to 69. Almost all the self-immolators belong to the generation brought up since China's occupation of Tibet which began in 1949.

The Central Tibetan Administration affirms that the reasons for the self-immolations are self-evident: political repression, economic marginalization, environmental destruction, and cultural assimilation. Chinese leaders selected during the 18th Party Congress must recognize that China's hardline policies in Tibet have utterly failed and only through dialogue can a peaceful and lasting solution be found. "We firmly believe that an end to repression will effectively end the cycle self-immolation" says Dr. Sangay. ■

*The Kashag*

## TCHRD releases report on enforced disappearances in Tibet

October 31, 2012

IMAGINE A CLOSE LOVED ONE BEING TAKEN into custody, held incommunicado for days, weeks, or even years, without any contact or communication with you or other family members. Imagine the mental anguish and torment of not knowing where they are, if they are being tortured or have been killed. In this respect, enforced disappearances have a "doubly paralyzing impact," not only on the victims, but also on their loved ones who live in a constant state of anxiety and fear about the fate of the disappeared person. Today, TCHRD, on the eve of the 98th session of the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances, releases an introductory report and analysis on enforced disappearances in Tibet.

Enforced disappearance is a serious international crime that violates multiple human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and other major international human rights instruments. Yet such disappearances are prevalent and commonplace for Tibetans living under Chinese rule. While there is a growing movement to ban enforced disappearances in any form or justification, the Chinese government has for the past many decades used enforced disappearances as a tool to suppress dissent and criticism, by disappearing and detaining incommunicado persons deemed threats to the PRC's "unity" and "stability." Security officers in Tibet, particularly the Public Security Bureau and the People's Armed Police, use enforced disappearance to terrorize and intimidate the disappeared person, his or her family members, as well as the entire community.

In 2008, TCHRD reported a surge in cases of enforced and involuntary disappearances following the outbreak of major protests across the Tibetan plateau. After a violent military crackdown in Tibet, TCHRD reported that at least

one thousand Tibetans had disappeared, their whereabouts and well-being unknown to family members and affiliated monasteries at the time. To date, the Chinese government has refused to divulge any information on the exact number of arrests and detentions or how many it has sentenced to extrajudicial forms of detention, such as 'Re-education Through Labour' (Ch: Liaoqiao).

The report also gives an analysis of a quintessential high-profile 'disappearance'; that of Chadrrel Rinpoche who 'disappeared' in May 1995

**"This heinous practice is not permitted under any circumstances. No exceptional circumstances whatsoever may be invoked to justify an enforced disappearance."**

*Jeremy Sarkin, UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (Nov. 2011)*

for allegedly 'giving out the name of the boy who was supposed to be the 11th Panchen Lama before it was approved by the [Chinese] authorities.' Rinpoche has been held in Chinese detention ever since, and in 2011, he was reported to have died under mysterious circumstances. Furthermore, official Chinese claims notwithstanding, the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, has also not been seen since he was secretly removed from his home in May 1995, nor have numerous appeals by the international community for specific information about his welfare and whereabouts been acknowledged.

During the March 2012 annual session, China's parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC),

approved proposed amendments to its Criminal Procedure Law. These latest amendments fail to outlaw the persistent use of enforced disappearance as a tool to crack down on critics of official policies. Perhaps the most disturbing revision is embodied in Article 73, which essentially legalises the secret detention of persons charged with perceived political crimes.

Unfortunately, due to the Chinese censorship and oppressive lockdown in Tibet, we have not been able to obtain more information or testimonies in order to write a fuller, more detailed report. However, this report is a much-needed and important step in preserving and honouring the collective history and memory of the 'disappeared' Tibetans as well as the extended Tibetan community. In particular, it is aimed at informing the Tibetan community of the international legal standards on enforced disappearances.

This report considers the international legal standards that prohibit enforced disappearances, in particular the recent International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and the relation between these laws and PRC's practice of using enforced disappearance in Tibet. It concludes with crucial recommendations for the PRC, the United Nations Human Rights Council, and the international community to end the practice of enforced disappearance in Tibet. It is essential that the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances, who are due to meet tomorrow, make greater efforts to act on our recommendations. The widespread and systematic application of enforced disappearance constitutes a crime against humanity according to international law, and should be dealt with as such. ■

*The 2012 Report is available in English and can be downloaded free-of-cost at TCHRD.org*

## EU, US, Canada and UK encourages dialogue to resolve Tibet issue

DECLARATION BY THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE, CATHERINE ASHTON, ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ON TIBETAN SELF-IMMOLATIONS

15 December, 2012

THE EU IS PROFOUNDLY SADDENED BY the increasing number of Tibetans committing self-immolation, many of them young people.

We are concerned by the restrictions on expressions of Tibetan identity, which appear to be giving rise to a surge of discontent in the region. While respecting China's territorial integrity, the EU calls upon the Chinese authorities to address the deep-rooted causes of the frustration of the Tibetan people and ensure that their civil, political, economic and social and cultural rights are respected, including their right to enjoy their own culture, to practise their own religion and to use their own language.

We also urge Chinese authorities to allow free access to all Tibetan autonomous areas for diplomats as well as for international journalists.

Finally, the EU encourages all concerned parties to resume a meaningful dialogue.

The United States has called on the Chinese government to address its policies that have aggravated the wave of self-immolations by Tibetans inside Tibet.

"We continue to publicly and privately to urge the Chinese Government at all levels to address policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions and threaten the distinct religious, cultural, and linguistic identity of the Tibetan people," State Department's Acting Deputy Spokesperson Patrick Ventrell said Friday.

"So we call on the Chinese Government to permit Tibetans to express their grievances freely, publicly, peacefully, and without fear of

retribution. So this is something that is very much a part of our dialogue with the Chinese Government," Mr Ventrell said.

The Canadian government also has expressed concern over the wave of tragic self-immolations in Tibet and urged the Chinese government resume dialogue with the Tibetan leadership to find a mutually-agreeable solution to the issue of Tibet.

"I am concerned about the escalating number of self-immolations in Tibetan areas of China and the increasingly punitive measures being taken in response, which further exacerbate tensions in the region," Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird said Friday.

"Canada supports Tibetans' freedoms of expression, assembly and association. That anyone should feel such an end is justified by these means is a striking testament to Tibetans' deep yearning for greater religious, linguistic and cultural rights.

"Canada encourages China to give full consideration to the traditions and culture of the Tibetan population in a manner that will help ease tensions. We call on China to lift restrictions on access to the affected areas for the diplomats, media and other observers.

"We urge China to engage in substantive and meaningful dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives in working toward a peaceful resolution of outstanding issues that is acceptable to both sides," Foreign Minister John Baird said.

On December 19, the British government has strongly called for the resumption of meaningful

dialogue to resolve the underlying grievances of Tibetan communities.

"Foreign Office Minister Hugo Swire has said that the UK has serious concerns about the self-immolations in Tibetan regions," said a statement from the British Embassy in Beijing on Tuesday (18 December).

Following a European Union statement on self-immolations in Tibet, Foreign Office Minister Hugo Swire said: "We strongly support the recent statement from Baroness Ashton about the situation in Tibet. We continue to have serious concerns about the human rights situation there, including the self-immolations in Tibetan regions.

"We urge the Chinese authorities to exercise restraint. At the same time, I join Baroness Ashton in calling on Tibetans not to resort to extreme forms of protest such as self-immolation, and urge their community and religious leaders to use their influence to stop this tragic loss of life. We strongly support the resumption of meaningful dialogue to resolve the underlying grievances of Tibetan communities.

"I also urge the Chinese government to ensure unrestricted access to the Tibetan Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas of China for diplomats, international media and other concerned parties. We believe a long term solution is best achieved through respect for universal principles of human rights and genuine autonomy for Tibet within the framework of the Chinese constitution," Foreign Office Minister Hugo Swire said. ■

## An Appeal to President Xi Jinping from the International Tibetan Studies Community

25 November, 2012

Mr President,

As you will be assuming your new role as President of the People's Republic of China in March 2013, the scientific community of Tibetologists would like to express to you its deep concern about the state of the Tibetan language in the Tibet Autonomous Region and in the Tibetan autonomous prefectures in neighboring provinces.

We know that many schools have been established in Tibetan areas over the last several decades, and we are delighted at that development. We also appreciate the benefits that school children can have from being educated in their own language.

However, over the last several years, the authorities have been trying to institute new measures that eliminate or severely restrict the use of Tibetan as the language of instruction in

Tibetan-speaking areas, such as the replacement of Tibetan by Chinese as the medium of education (announced in Qinghai in 2010) and the replacement of textbooks written in Tibetan by Chinese textbooks—as was seen in Rebkong (Chin: Tongren) in March 2012. These developments have taken place despite the fact that worldwide research on this topic as well as official Chinese statistics have shown that students perform better when they are studying scientific subjects in their own language.

This policy has already been active in the Tibet Autonomous Region for several years and has led to well-known results: students destined for senior positions in the public or private sectors now have only a superficial knowledge of their own language and civilization.

The Tibetan people of Qinghai have repeatedly, through peaceful demonstrations by citizens, and through petitions and letters,

expressed their opposition to the new language policy, which is officially designated the "Qinghai Province Mid- and Long-Term Plan for Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020)." They have made known their strong desire to preserve their language as the medium of instruction and communication in their schools, which does not mean in any sense that they are not willing to learn Chinese. They generally acknowledge the economic and cultural significance of the Chinese language.

Such requests are consistent with the Chinese Constitution which specifies in Article 4 that all nationalities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their own folkways and customs. Moreover, according to the decree of 2002, in the Tibet Autonomous Region, the Tibetan language has the status of an official language in China, though that status does not

always seem to be reflected in practice.

Dozens of Tibetans of all ages, men and women, religious and lay, have committed acts of self-immolation over the last few years. Several of them have shouted slogans demanding respect for the language and culture of Tibet.

As specialists in the areas of Tibetan language, culture and religion, we would like to share with you, through this letter, our own concerns about the various measures that jeopardize the continuing viability of this civilization, a civilization that is one of the treasures of humanity and for which the Chinese government has clearly stated its responsibility. We would like to remind you that in China the Tibetan language is, after Chinese, one of oldest continually-used

languages, and has also contributed to the understanding and reconstruction of the ancient Sino-Tibetan family, a family that, like Indo-European, contains many hundreds of languages.

Our work has led us to pursue our professional and intellectual lives within the structures of universities and institution of higher education. We know the value of Tibet's civilization and we regret that the Tibetan language, which is its fundamental support, is seemingly marginalized and devalued in the TAR and in various other Tibetan autonomous administrative units at the same time that it is increasingly being taught and studied in universities around the world. The responses of the authorities to the demands of Tibetans who are naturally worried about the

disappearance of their culture have not assuaged their deep concerns about the situation.

This is why, at the time when new leadership is taking control of the country, we address you collectively with the hope that you will be sympathetic to the aspirations of Tibetan citizens of China; that you will work with them to find peaceful solutions to this crisis that will allow for the promotion and development of Tibet's language and culture. There is no reason why the Tibetan language and culture cannot coexist peacefully with the Chinese language and culture through the application of the principles expressed in the successive constitutions of the People's Republic of China, which is constituted as a multicultural state. ■

## Statement of Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay on 23rd Anniversary of Conferment of Nobel Peace Prize to HH the Dalai Lama



**10 December, 2012**

WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY TO COMMEMORATE the 23rd anniversary of the conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the 64th anniversary of the International Human Rights Day. On this noteworthy occasion, the Kashag pays its obeisance to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and extends its warmest greetings to all Tibetans, friends and well wishers around the world.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee's citation for the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize to His Holiness the Dalai Lama emphasized His Holiness' opposition to the use of violence and his advocacy of peaceful solutions based upon tolerance and mutual respect. In the twenty-three years since receiving the Nobel Prize, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's stature has attained such depth that his very name has become synonymous with compassion and non-violence. Tibetans are incredibly fortunate to have someone like His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama as our most revered leader.

On this occasion we must focus our attention and concern on the current crisis engulfing Tibet. With enormously sorrow, I report that a total of 95 Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibet since 2009. There were 12 self-immolations in Tibet in all of 2011 and 82 so far in 2012, including 28 in the month of November alone. Sadly, 80 of these Tibetans have died. What began in the heavily sentined monasteries has spread as nomads, students and ordinary Tibetans in all three regions of Tibet (Amdo, Kham and U-Tsang) including Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet, join the swelling ranks of people willing to set themselves on fire to protest conditions in Tibet.

These tragic events in Tibet challenge in new ways a central assertion and rationalization of the Chinese government, namely, that Tibetans in

Tibet are happy and content. For decades, against astronomical odds, Tibetans in Tibet have challenged this assertion and channeled their discontent in peaceful and myriad ways. After the tumultuous period of 1960s, from September 1987 to March 1989, Tibet again became front-page news when a series of major and non-violent protests erupted in Lhasa and neighboring Tibetan areas. At that time, Chinese security officials responded by imposing martial law and expelling all foreign journalists and tourists.

Later, in 2006, Tibetans gave up the use of fur of endangered animals and the world witnessed the extraordinary mass gatherings of Tibetans burning fur in public bonfires. Chinese authorities disapproved this show of Tibetan solidarity and, once again cracked down. Even so, celebrations over His Holiness the Dalai Lama receiving the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal in 2007 was not tolerated by the Chinese security forces in several Tibetan areas. In that same year, Rungye Adak, a Tibetan nomad, received an eight-year sentence for publicly calling for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet. Other Tibetans were also given stiff prison sentences.

The year 2008 marked the time of the largest and most intense unrest as thousands of Tibetans from all walks of life protested against hardline Chinese policies. Hundreds were arrested, beaten, tortured and killed. These events cast a pall over the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

More recently, in addition to the fiery self-immolations, other forms of protests and displays of solidarity have occurred throughout Tibet. Tibetan students in Rebkong and Chabcha in Northeast Tibet took to the streets in thousands demanding protection of Tibetan language and equality. Clashes have erupted in different parts

of Tibet against efforts to divert the flow of rivers and mining projects that have displaced large number of Tibetans. In a brave show of solidarity with the self-immolators, Tibetan teachers, government officials, writers, monks and businessmen began a three-day hunger strike on November 26 in Lhasa, Drakgo, Jomda, Dzachukha, Tridu, Serthar, Siling, Karze and Chengdu in China's Sichuan Province. Another powerful development has been the Lhakar movement where every Wednesday thousands of Tibetans come together in formal and informal ways and take I-am-Tibetan pledges to speak, wear, eat and accentuate everything Tibetan.

The self-immolations are a continuation of a sustained non-violent Tibetan resistance against the occupation of Tibet and its repression of Tibetans. They, however, represent a new threshold of Tibetan despair and resentment, and a worsening of the vicious cycle of unrest-repression-more unrest. The Kashag attributes the self-immolation and current situation to the political and religious repression, economic marginalization, social discrimination, cultural assimilation and environmental destruction in Tibet.

Despite repeated appeals by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) to refrain from such drastic acts, Tibetan self-immolations persist. The universal demands of the Tibetans have been the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans. This is the precious hope of the people of Tibet. It is the responsibility of those of us fortunate to live in freedom to do all within our power to help bring the Tibetan demands to fruition. We, therefore, view it as a sacred duty to make the cries of the self-immolators and other protestors heard around the world.

Inevitably, the Chinese Communist Party has blamed the self-immolations on the exiled Tibetan leadership. But to blame His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Administration is a frank admission by the Chinese government of its utter failure to win the loyalty of Tibetans despite fifty plus years of occupation. It also reflects Beijing's failure to engage in legitimate policy options, and to continue to rely, instead, on the blame game.

In my March 10, 2012 statement, I called on all Tibetans and friends to make 2012 a Tibet Lobby Year. This call, in conjunction with the dedicated work of Tibetans and Tibet support groups, has been a success as we have since seen significant official statements of support by many countries; resolutions in parliaments and congress in the European Union (EU), France, Italy and the United States; and statement by parliamentarians in Australia, Brazil, Canada, EU, France, Germany, Italy, India, Japan, South Africa and others.

The CTA expresses deep appreciation to the United Nations and various governments and parliaments for their attention to the deteriorating situation in Tibet.

The UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, Navi Pillay, recently issued an unprecedented call to Chinese leaders to urgently address the underlying grievances of the Tibetan people. "Social stability in Tibet will never be achieved through heavy security measures and suppression of human rights," she said on November 2. Ms. Pillay appealed to the Chinese Government "to seriously consider the recommendations made to it by various international human rights bodies, as well as to avail itself of the expert advice being offered by the UN's independent experts on human rights."

We also welcome the recent comments made by Gary Locke, the US ambassador to China, who visited Tibetan areas in late September and implored "the Chinese to really meet with the representatives of the Tibetan

people to address and re-examine some of the policies that have led to some restrictions and the violence and the self-immolations."

On November 21, the Human Rights Commissioner of Germany urged the Chinese government to reform its policies and requested international observers be allowed to visit Tibet. On November 27, the French Senate adopted a resolution calling on the European Union to give priority to Tibet within the mandate of its recently appointed EU Special Representative for Human Rights.

The above actions by various governments and institutions are a welcome positive development. We urge all foreign governments engaging in Human Rights Dialogue with China to acknowledge that the situation in Tibet has worsened. We urge them, and the international community, to intervene to end the crisis in Tibet. If Beijing ends repression of Tibetans then the self-immolations will abate. The CTA remains steadfastly committed to the Middle-Way Approach and to the resumption of dialogue between Beijing and Dharamsala to resolve the issue of Tibet. The responsibility as well as the solution for the current crisis in Tibet lies with the Chinese government.

We appreciate the support of some of our Chinese friends and various Chinese NGOs based outside China, but remain deeply disturbed and saddened at the silence and seeming indifference of most Chinese people, particularly that of Chinese intellectuals and public thinkers, to the suffering of the Tibetan people. The Tibetan struggle is neither anti-China nor anti-Chinese people. What Tibetans seek is freedom and genuine autonomy as enshrined in the Chinese constitution. I appeal to our Chinese brothers and sisters to join us in supporting the aspirations of the Tibetan people.

Let us build on the successful lobbying efforts of 2012 by launching a Solidarity with Tibet campaign in 2013. I urge all Tibetan Associations, Tibet Support Groups,

international NGOs, people of all faiths, and friends of justice to continue to lobby governments and parliaments for Tibet and the Tibetan people. Organize rallies and vigils particularly in capital and major world cities. Please call on the Chinese government to allow international media access into Tibet. Time magazine listed Tibetan self-immolations as one of the most underreported story of 2011. Let us alter that by reaching out to the media and encouraging them to write and broadcast about what is happening in Tibet.

Let us declare every 17th May as the Solidarity Day for Tibet. On that day in 1995, the six-year-old boy, Gendhun Choeky Nyima, who was recognized by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as the 11th Panchen Lama, was taken into custody by the Chinese authorities and has not been seen publicly since.

Also, the Kashag and the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile will be jointly organizing a four-day program of rallies, presentations and other solidarity activities from January 30 to February 2, 2013 in New Delhi. Kalons, Tibetan parliamentarians and representatives from various Tibetan settlements will be participating.

In closing, the CTA offers its undying gratitude to the people and government of India for their generosity, hospitality and assistance to the Tibetan refugees for these many years. We also extend, on behalf of all Tibetans, profound appreciation to our old and new friends around the world. Your outspoken and resounding support is needed more than ever.

To our brothers and sisters in Tibet, we are with you every step of the way. The three principles of unity, innovation and self-reliance will guide us towards our goal of seeing His Holiness the Dalai Lama return to Tibet and restoring freedom for Tibetans.

Finally, the Kashag and I join the people of Tibet in wishing His Holiness the Dalai Lama continued good health. May all his wishes be fulfilled. ■



## Tibet News

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