

Defining Tibet

TIBET WAS TRADITIONALLY COMPRISED OF THREE MAIN REGIONS: Amdo (northeastern Tibet), Kham (eastern Tibet) and U-Tsang (central and western Tibet). The Tibet Autonomous Region was established by the Chinese government in 1965 and covers the area of Tibet west of the Yangtse River (Tibetan: Driчу), including part of Kham. The rest of Amdo and Kham have been incorporated into Chinese provinces, and designated as Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures and Tibetan Autonomous Counties. As a result, most of Qinghai and parts of Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan Provinces are acknowledged by the Chinese authorities to be “Tibet autonomous”. The term “Tibet” is used to refer to all of these Tibetan areas currently under the jurisdiction of the People’s Republic of China.

Recommendations on Tibet *by the International Campaign for Tibet*

The uprising during the spring of 2008 and the continuing tensions in Tibet result from the failure of the government of the People’s Republic of China to implement a system of genuine autonomy for Tibetans concurrent with its campaign to dilute the Tibetan identity and, in particular, to constrain the practice of Tibetan Buddhism, of which devotion to the Dalai Lama is an integral element.

A political solution is possible. Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Chinese officials have been engaged in a dialogue since September 2002. Unfortunately, six years of sporadic dialogue have not progressed to substantive negotiations and have not met the expectations of the international community, including several heads of state, for meaningful progress towards a mutually-agreeable solution for Tibet

The Tibetan position in the dialogue is that Tibetans be able to maintain their distinctive Tibetan identity into the future. Central to this position is the political right of autonomy provided to all Tibetans living in contiguous Tibetan areas, an area roughly defined by the geography of the Tibetan plateau, governed by a single administrative unit under a single unified policy. According to the Chinese government’s own

analysis of its law on regional ethnic autonomy, the Tibetan people are entitled to the full political right of autonomy:

- full decision-making power in economic and social development undertakings;
- freedom to inherit and develop traditional culture and to practice religious belief;
- freedom to administer, protect and be the first to utilize natural resources; and
- freedom to independently develop educational and cultural undertakings.

Given the disappointing results of the dialogue, the instability in Tibet and the unjustifiably and disproportionately harsh consequences for Tibetans involved in the spring 2008 demonstrations, and the intensification of Chinese government campaigns against the influence of the Dalai Lama, ICT offers the following recommendations:

For the Government of the People’s Republic of China:

1. Provide unimpeded access to Tibet for UN human rights experts and other independent observers to investigate the human rights situation in Tibet;
2. Release immediately and unconditionally all those detained solely for engaging in peaceful protest;
3. Provide an accounting of all who have been killed or gone missing and for all those detained, including names, whereabouts and charges against them;
4. Ensure that all detainees have prompt access to family members and any medical treatment they may require, lawyers of their choice, legal documents in the Tibetan language, and are treated in accordance with the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment, to which the People’s Republic of China is a party;
5. Provide unrestricted foreign media access to all areas of China, including Tibet, in keeping with the “Free and

Open Olympics” promised in the Beijing Olympic Action Plan; and

6. Allow an independent investigation of Chinese government claims that the Dalai Lama orchestrated the March 14 demonstration in Lhasa and seeks to disrupt the Beijing Olympics. The Dalai Lama has consistently stated that he supports the Beijing Olympics.

For other governments and heads of state:

7. Heads of state should not attend the 2008 Olympics Opening Ceremony, unless there is meaningful progress in the dialogue and efforts to address the crisis situation in Tibet. Those who have confirmed attendance should press Chinese President Hu Jintao for a commitment to meet face-to-face with the Dalai Lama;
8. Continue to work multilaterally for meaningful progress in the Tibetan-Chinese dialogue and consider the establishment of a Contact Group for Tibet as well as other means to enhance regular contacts, exchanges of views and coordination on Tibetan issues;

9. In addition to quiet diplomacy, recognize that assertive and visible engagement with the Chinese government can yield positive consequences and provide hope to Tibetans that a peaceful solution is possible;
10. Support politically and financially efforts to address chronic needs, as articulated by the Tibetan people, for assistance in such areas as education, work force development, environmental protection, and sustainable development; and
11. Adopt a common position that heads of state meet with the Dalai Lama as the preeminent Tibetan leader and also press for his participation in appropriate global forums.

For the international community:

12. Foreign broadcast and other media outlets actively seek access to Tibet and Tibetans in order to provide the world an accurate portrayal of Chinese rule in Tibet.