



Imprisoned 2010 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Liu Xiaobo.

Chinese Writer and Human Rights Activist Liu Xiaobo awarded 2010 Nobel Peace prize

On 8 October Chinese writer and human rights activist Liu Xiaobo was awarded the 2010 Nobel Peace prize. Liu is one of China's most prominent dissidents and author of "Charter 08", a political manifesto calling for gradual political reforms in China and the establishment of a society based on the rule of law, democracy and human rights. Announcing the prize, the Norwegian Nobel committee praised Liu Xiaobo for his "long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China. The (...) committee has long believed that there is a close connection between human rights and peace."

Liu's wife, who is currently under house arrest in Beijing, was allowed an hour-long visit with him on 10 October in the prison in northeast China where he is detained. The New York Times reported that an emotional Liu told his wife "This is for the lost souls of June 4" (the date on which PLA troops entered Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989 to violently end the mass protest there).

The Dalai Lama joined international reactions to the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo, saying in a statement: "Awarding the Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo is the international community's recognition of the increasing voices among the Chinese people in pushing China towards political, legal and constitutional reforms." (Read the full statement at <http://tinyurl.com/32zlna4>)

As early as 2000, two years before the resumption of dialogue between representatives of the Dalai Lama and Beijing officials, Liu Xiaobo wrote an article endorsing the Dalai Lama's position on autonomy for Tibet within the People's Republic of China, saying that the position was "not only well-founded morally, but practically, it is a sincere expression for peaceful negotiations". In March 2008, Liu Xiaobo's name was prominent among the original 29 signatories of a 12-point petition to the Chinese authorities calling for dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama, noting the "serious mistakes" in

"This is for the lost souls of June 4"

— Liu Xiaobo, Nobel Peace laureate 2010

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Reading suggestion

- "The Right of Self-government", 2000, supporting the Dalai Lama's position on Tibetan autonomy (Chinese at <http://tinyurl.com/29frwk8>, English at <http://tinyurl.com/23g5o56>)
- Essay on Tibetan artist and writer Woese, 2004 (Chinese at <http://tinyurl.com/24p7kpu>, English at <http://tinyurl.com/39rlunc>)
- "Twelve Suggestions on Dealing with the Tibetan Situation", 2008 (<http://tinyurl.com/8y6xho>)

China's policies in Tibet, and criticizing the Chinese government's response to the protests in Tibet as lacking "a style of governing that conforms to the standards of modern civilization."

The Chinese government's reaction to the award has been harsh, calling Liu a "criminal" and the award an "obscenity" and a "complete

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Celebration of 50 Years of Tibetan Democratic Institutions in exile

On 2 September 2010 the Tibetan government in-exile celebrated the 50th anniversary of Tibetan Democracy Day. Ahead of the commemoration, around 450 Tibetan delegates gathered at the Tibetan settlement in Bylakuppe in South India's Karnataka State for the first National General meeting. The delegates consisted of members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, members of the Kashag (Cabinet), representatives of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and Bon, representatives of local Tibetan assemblies, NGOs and other members of civil society. In his address to the delegates, Kalon Tripa (Prime Minister) Samdong Rinpoche said: "The Tibetan community in exile, unlike other refugee communities, has become one of most exemplary and successful establishments in terms of society, education and health among others."



Tibetans in Kathmandu voting for a new Prime Minister and Parliament in exile on Oct. 3, before armed Nepalese police seized ballot boxes

Seventeen parliamentarians from 13 countries attended the International Network for Parliamentarians on Tibet (INPaT) Working Group, which was also hosted in Bylakuppe. INPaT urged the People's Republic of China "to consider the Memorandum for Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People of November 2008 and the Note on the Memorandum as a basis for substantive discussion leading towards positive, meaningful change in Tibet". It was also agreed to organize an international parliamentary event in 2011 on the Sino-Tibetan dialogue process, including suggestions on how to agree and implement the Memorandum. Moreover, INPaT called upon the Election Commission of the Tibetan Government in Exile "to invite international election monitoring entities to observe the 2011 parliamentary and Kalon Tripa elections."

The first round of Kalon Tripa elections was held on October 3 and Tibetans in-exile across the world went

to the polls to cast their ballots to nominate candidates for the post of the Prime Minister and Members of the Parliament in Exile. With the help of highly publicized campaigns initiated by various NGOs, youth groups and individuals alike, the overall figure of registered voters is higher than the last general election held in 2006. The final round of election will be held on 20 March 2011. However, this first round of elections faced reprisals in Kathmandu, Nepal, where armed Nepalese police in riot gear seized exile Tibetan ballot boxes. Permission to hold the election had effectively been given by the Nepalese authorities, but police stormed the three centers in the midst of the voting to seize the ballot boxes.

According to Tibetan sources in touch with prominent Nepalese rights advocates, the Chinese embassy in Nepal had instructed the Nepalese Home Ministry to stop the election. There is serious concern as to the implications of the intervention by Nepalese authorities for Tibetans in Nepal, as personal and identifying details were included on the ballot forms.

The Chinese and Nepalese governments have recently made a new agreement to share information relating to "anti-China" activities in Nepal. There is also concern about the impact on the election itself as the Tibetan population in Nepal represented a substantial section of the exile Tibetan electorate. The Tibetan government-in-exile has sought intervention by international organizations to obtain all ballot boxes confiscated. In a communication to the United Nations (UN) and Amnesty International, deputy speaker of the Parliament-in-Exile Dolma Gyari highlighted the high-handedness of the Nepal government in disrupting the elections by confiscating the ballot boxes. ■

See also:

- INPaT's full statement on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of Tibetan Democracy Day: <http://www.unpo.org/article/11618>
- Further information: <http://tinyurl.com/32ce8se>

Chinese Writer...

violation of the principles of the prize and an insult to the Peace Prize itself". China has since taken additional measures:

- On 11 October, European diplomats were blocked from meeting with Liu Xiaobo's wife, Liu Xia. Simon Sharpe, the first secretary of political affairs of the EU delegation in China, wanted to personally deliver EU Commission President Barroso's statement of congratulations on the peace award. Sharp was accompanied by diplomats from Switzerland, Sweden, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Italy and Australia.
- Beijing warned countries with Oslo-based diplomats not to attend the Nobel Ceremony on 10 December. Despite the pressure, a French Foreign Ministry spokesman announced: "France is always represented by its ambassador to Norway at the Nobel Prize ceremony in Oslo. This tradition will continue this year". Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands have all said they would follow normal protocol and send an ambassador to the ceremony.
- Geir Lundestad, Director of the Norwegian Nobel Institute, has described to AFP recent cyber attacks on the Institute and on him in particular as "extremely reprehensible," and said, "This is the first time that we have been the targets of such well-organized attacks. From what I understand, not just anybody could be doing this".
- On 9 November, Liu's defense lawyer Mo Shaoping and Peking University law professor He Weifang, both signatories of Charter 08, were prevented from leaving China to attend a conference of the International Bar Association in London, scheduled months ahead. They held November return tickets and had no plans to go to Oslo, but Chinese authorities told them they were not allowed to leave, because they "might endanger state security." ■



Tibetan students in Rebkong peacefully protested the new Chinese language education curriculum.

Tibetan Students Protest over Education Reform

On 19 October in Rebkong (Ch: Tongren) in China's Qinghai province, thousand of Tibetan school and college students began to protest against education reforms restricting the use of Tibetan language, which they claim exacerbates inequalities faced by Tibetans. The protests are among the largest in the Tibetan plateau since March 2008, but unlike those protests, they have been peaceful and have involved mostly students.

At a meeting on education reform held by the Education Department of Qinghai province in mid-October, the local Communist Party Secretary and Chairman ordered that all subjects must now be taught in Mandarin and that all textbooks must be printed in Chinese, with the exception of those specifically for Tibetan and English language classes.

Monks and the public joined Rebkong's student protest, which congregated at the main square of the Rebkong County Government and the Malho Prefecture Government gate. Later on 21 October, students in Golok Prefecture also protested and on 22 October protests were held in Beijing at the Minzu (Chinese: Nationality) University of China by several hundred Tibetan students.

The scale of the protests at a time of already intense political repression - and also in China's capital - reflect the strength of feeling among Tibetans about the marginalization and erosion of their language, the bedrock of Tibetan identity, religion and culture. The demonstrations follow a new emphasis in Qinghai province on the importance of Chinese language for Tibetans and a new 'bilingual education' imperative that is designed to transition 'minority' students from education in their mother tongue to education in Chinese. The situation is reportedly tense in the area, with a strong security presence.

The Tibetan language is fundamental to Tibetan identity, culture and religion, and is one of the four oldest and most original languages of Asia. At a roundtable discussion in Washington, DC, scholar Nicolas Tournadre, professor of linguistics from the University of Provence and an expert on the Tibetan language, said: "There is a real threat of extinction or very serious decline of the Tibetan language and the Tibetan culture within two - or at the most three - generations. [...] During the last 15 years, I have personally witnessed this decline. [...] Languages are not neutral. They convey very specific social and cultural behaviors and ways of thinking. So, the extinction of the Tibetan language will have tremendous consequences for the Tibetan culture".

A petition obtained by ICT and signed by more than 300 teachers and students from Qinghai expresses their view that while learning Chinese is essential for students in Tibet today, the main language medium for teaching should remain Tibetan. The letter was written by teachers from elementary and middle schools from the area, and also signed by some students.

U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China's Annual Report on Human Rights and the Rule of Law in China

On 10 October, the Congressional-Executive Commission on China released its annual report voicing concern that rights conditions had deteriorated in the past year, especially with regard to an "increasingly harsh" crackdown on rights activists and lawyers.

The commission is made up of nine senators, nine congressmen and five senior administration officials. In its report, it calls for the release of Liu Xiaobo as well as other prominent dissidents such as Gao Zhisheng and activists as Hu Jia, accusing the authorities of using the criminal code to "quell free expression". ■

The full report is available at: <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt10/index.php>

See also:

- ICT report "Protests by students against downgrading of Tibetan language spread to Beijing": <http://tinyurl.com/3a9t5lg>
- Translation of the student petition letter available at: <http://tinyurl.com/23xd4lz>



ICT's EU Policy Director, Vincent Metten (far left), speaks at the EU-China Seminar on Human Rights, Madrid

Participation of ICT in the EU-China Seminar on Human Rights in Madrid

On 29th June 2010 the European Union and the People's Republic of China held the 29th round of the EU-China Dialogue on Human Rights in Madrid, Spain. The EU delegation was led by Jorge Domecq, Director General of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, while the Chinese Delegation was led by Chen Xu, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

ICT's EU Policy Director, Vincent Metten, was present representing ICT on behalf of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), where ICT has been a member since April 2010.

Metten addressed the issue of economic, social and cultural rights of minorities in China. Metten explained that China is failing to meet its international obligations on minorities' rights and that state policies have failed to provide institutional protection or guarantee preservation of minorities' unique cultures. He also reiterated the need to implement a genuine autonomy as expressed in the Tibetan Memorandum and that Tibetans should have the possibility to live in compact communities within the borders of the People Republic of China and have the right to govern themselves in accordance with the Tibetan nationality's own needs, priorities and characteristics. Finally, Metten talked about the right to access information, which is strictly controlled and monitored by Chinese authorities, particularly invoking the state secrets system.

The latest edition of the China Rights Forum, a publication of the international NGO Human Rights in China (HRIC), contains an exchange of views between representatives of NGOs based on their experiences in attending the expert seminars accompanying the Dialogue sessions and their concerns about the Dialogue process itself. China Rights Forum is available at <http://www.hrichina.org/public/>. ■

Reading Suggestion

European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) – Policy Brief

“Towards an EU Human Rights Strategy for a Post-Western World”

By Susi Dennison and Anthony Dworkin

Susi Dennison and Anthony Dworkin, Policy Fellows at the ECFR, argue that the shift of global power away from the West threatens to undermine the EU's hopes of supporting human rights, democracy and the rule of law beyond its borders. However, they also support the idea that the EU can still make a difference on global values by following a three-part strategy presented in the paper. If Europe projects confidence in the values with which it is associated while simultaneously pursuing a realistic approach to supporting them, it is most likely to support its global standing and help bring about an international order that matches its interests. ■

To read the full paper, visit ECFR at <http://tinyurl.com/25ur8vm>