

'EUROPE STANDS WITH TIBET' RALLY HELD IN GENEVA

OVER 3,500 TIBETANS AND TIBET SUPPORTERS FROM ACROSS EUROPE GATHERED IN GENEVA ON 10 MARCH TO COMMEMORATE THE 59TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TIBET UPRISING IN 1959.



Tibetans and Tibet supporters from across Europe gathered on Place des Nations in Geneva on 10 March. (Photo: ICT)

Participants braved the rain to march from the Jardin Anglais in Geneva's old city to the Place des Nations - in front of the United Nations' building - to urge the UN to send a fact-finding mission to Tibet and demand genuine autonomy for their homeland. They were addressed by representatives from Tibetan communities and associations,

the Central Tibetan Administration, as well as European parliamentarians and officials, who expressed their support for Tibet. ICT Germany's Executive Director Kai Müller highlighted the importance of this international solidarity for the Tibetan struggle, which reflects universal values such as justice and the defence

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TIBET BRIEF

MARCH 2018

A REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

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From left to right: Jamyang Choedon (President of the Tibetan Community in Sweden), Molly Scott Cato (British Member of the European Parliament), Thomas Mann (German Member of the European Parliament), Jacqueline Eustache-Briniot (French Senator), Thubten Wangchen (Member of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile), Vincent Metten (ICT's EU Policy Director), Martin Bursik (Former environment Minister of the Czech Republic). (Photo: ICT)

of human rights. The programme also included prayers and musical performances by the Irish singer Shirley Grimes and Swiss-Tibetan artist Loten Namling, who performed a cover version of John Lennon's "Imagine" with his daughter. The event, which was jointly organised by a number of Tibetan Communities and Associations in Europe, supported by the International Campaign for Tibet, coincided with the 37th session of the UN Human Rights Council which was taking place in the Palais des Nations.

This year's 10 March anniversary also marked the unprecedented wave of protests which swept through Tibet

in 2008 and was met by a violent crackdown. This was commemorated with a number of other events around the world, including a protest in Brussels dedicated to the over 150 Tibetans who have self-immolated since 2009. A number of cities across the world also flew the Tibetan flag on their buildings to mark the occasion, including Nancy in France.

MORE ON THIS:

- [ICT's video of the European Rally in Geneva](#)
- [Statement of the President of the Central Tibetan Administration on the 59th Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day](#)

15 MARCH, 2018, MARKED THE 30TH YEAR OF THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET'S SERVICE TO THE TIBETAN PEOPLE

While ICT's work is far from over, our 30th anniversary represents an opportunity to reflect on some of the achievements made since we established our first office in Washington D.C. in 1988, to celebrate the resilience of the Tibetan people, and to honour the dedication and support shown to the people of Tibet by our members and supporters worldwide. We were also privileged to receive a special video message from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in which he outlined his support and hope for our organisation in the coming years.



The anniversary was also the occasion for ICT to engage in a process of refining and modernising its brand - to build upon the movement as well as to capture the attention of a millennial audience. The new ICT logo – a fresh and modern take on the existing flame and word mark - and new design of the Tibet Brief are part of this process –we hope you like them!

MORE ON THIS:

- [Full report of ICT's 30th anniversary celebration in the U.S. Congress](#)
- [Video recording of ICT's Chairman Richard Gere's speech at ICT's 30th anniversary celebration in the U.S. Congress](#)
- [Video message from the Dalai Lama on ICT's 30th anniversary](#)



ICT AND FIDH ASK EU TO URGE FOR ACCESS TO TIBET IN 2018 EU-CHINA TOURISM YEAR

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2018 EU-CHINA TOURISM YEAR, ICT AND THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (FIDH) HAVE WRITTEN TO EU LEADERS TO EXPRESS CONCERNS ABOUT THE PROMOTION OF TOURISM IN TIBET.



Logo unveiling by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang, in the presence of Commissioner Malmström (replacing Commissioner Bieńkowska) and Chairman Li from CNTA, in Brussels on June 2, 2017. (Photo: ecty2018.org)

The letter, dated 14 February 2018, highlights the lack of access to Tibet for foreigners (when Chinese tourists enjoy free and open access to the EU), the restrictions imposed on Tibetans' freedom of movement and their lack of involvement in the decision-making process of tourism policies and projects. It also raises a number of questions and recommendations to EU leaders, and urges them to extend the notion of reciprocity - a notion promoted by the EU with regards to its trade relationship with China - to "the respect for fundamental rights, including the freedom of movement and the freedom of information of European citizens in China and Tibet".

The EU-China Tourism Year (ECTY) is an initiative announced at the EU-China Summit last year, aimed at "boosting

visitor flows and investment on both sides". In January, a picture depicting plans to wrap the Atomium in Chinese and EU flags to celebrate the initiative was removed from the ECTY's official website, after ICT contacted those in charge of the iconic Brussels structure, who said they had not approved the project.

The moral implications of celebrating a tourism year with China without a single reference to human rights had also been raised by a number of Members of the European Parliament during a debate on the ECTY in Strasbourg last November.

MORE ON THIS:

- [ICT and FIDH's letter to Jean-Claude Juncker and Federica Mogherini regarding the 2018 ECTY](#)



TIBETAN WRITER SHOKJANG RELEASED UPON COMPLETION OF PRISON SENTENCE

SHOKJANG, A POPULAR TIBETAN INTELLECTUAL, BLOGGER AND WRITER, HAS BEEN RELEASED AFTER SPENDING THREE YEARS IN PRISON LINKED TO HIS WRITINGS.

According to Tibetan sources, when his sentence expired on 19 March, 2018, he was returned to his hometown of Gangya village in Sangchu country (Chinese: Xiahe) in the Amdo region of Tibet (currently administered by Gansu province). The Tibetan language service of Radio Free Asia quoted a Tibetan source saying that Tibetans "from many different areas" came to welcome him home.

Shokjang, also known as Druklo, was originally detained by police in Rebkong (Chinese: Tongren), Qinghai, on 19 March, 2015, and sentenced to three years in prison (see Political Prisoner Focus in [Tibet Brief edition 53](#)). Known for his reflective and thought-provoking articles on issues of ethnic policy in the People's Republic of China, he wrote an eloquent letter from detention appealing against his incarceration: "I am a Chinese citizen, and as a Tibetan intellectual, I have to be concerned for the precious lives of my own kin. If doing so is called 'instigating separatism', nothing is more laughable...".

Like many former political prisoners in Tibet, his movements will be monitored and his ability to contact the outside world constricted by Chinese authorities.

U.S., CANADIAN AND EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS EXPRESS CONCERNS ABOUT TIBET AT UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

ON 14 MARCH, THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, THE EUROPEAN UNION, FRANCE AND GERMANY EXPRESSED STRONG CONCERNS ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN TIBET IN THEIR ITEM 4 STATEMENTS TO THE 37TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL.

Speaking under the key Item 4 “Human rights situations that require the Council’s attention,” the government delegations to the Human Rights Council expressed alarm at the ongoing violations of the fundamental rights of Tibetans, saying they were incompatible with China’s national and international commitments. Many also called on China to release all those detained solely for exercising or protecting fundamental rights – some explicitly mentioned the case of Tibetan language rights advocate Tashi Wangchuk.

Concerns about Tibet were also raised on a number of other occasions during this session -which coincides with the 10th anniversary of the 2008 protests in Tibet

- including by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights who [noted](#) that his office “*continues to receive urgent appeals regarding arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, ill-treatment and discrimination*” of Tibetans. The EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis also [raised](#) the case of Tashi Wangchuk during the High Level Segment.

In addition to official statements about Tibet, ICT, on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR), delivered three oral statements at this session. One drew the attention of the Council’s attention to the case of Tibetan language rights advocate Tashi Wangchuk, while another one highlighted the dangers of China’s

newly revised regulations on religion for the survival of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet. The last statement highlighted the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet more generally since 2008, and called on the Council’s members to strengthen their efforts to address China’s harmful policies and abuses in Tibet in the year of China’s Universal Periodic Review.

MORE ON THIS:

- [ICT’s statement on Human Rights Defenders in Tibet](#)
- [ICT’s statement on Freedom of Religion in Tibet](#)
- [Full remarks of the delegations who raised specific concerns about Tibet, and ICT’s statement under item 4](#)

OVER 100 PARTICIPANTS FROM 21 STATES GATHER FOR THE 10TH ANNUAL TIBET LOBBY DAY IN WASHINGTON D.C.

ON 5 AND 6 MARCH, TIBETAN-AMERICANS AND FRIENDS OF TIBET GATHERED IN WASHINGTON D.C. FOR THE 10TH ANNUAL TIBET LOBBY DAY, ORGANISED BY THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET IN COOPERATION WITH U.S. BASED TIBET GROUPS, STUDENTS FOR A FREE TIBET AND TIBETAN ASSOCIATIONS IN THE U.S.



Participants with U.S. Congressman Jim McGovern. (Photo: ICT)

This year saw more than 120 participants from 21 states lobby their elected representatives in Washington D.C. to stand up for Tibet. They met with Members of Congress, legislative directors and foreign policy staffers and presented them with legislative and appropriation requests that benefit Tibet.

The primary demand this year was for the passage of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, a bipartisan bill designed to end China’s restrictive access policies, which prevent American journalists,

diplomats, citizens (including Tibetan-Americans) and others from visiting Tibet. They also urged Congress to continue funding Tibet programmes, asked for the release of Tibetan political prisoners and hold Chinese leaders accountable for human rights violations in Tibet. Finally, participants asked Members of Congress to sign a bill calling on the Trump Administration to fully implement the U.S. Tibetan Policy Act and nominate a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, and thanked those who had already done so.

FIRST SELF-IMMOLATION IN 2018, AMID INTENSIFIED SECURITISATION IN MARCH ANNIVERSARY WEEK

A TIBETAN MAN IN HIS 40S, TSEKHO TUGCHAK, SET FIRE TO HIMSELF AND DIED ON 7 MARCH IN NGABA (CHINESE: ABA), EASTERN TIBET, THE FIRST SELF-IMMOLATION IN TIBET THIS YEAR.



Tsekho, who was from Namtsoma village in Me'uruma township in Ngaba, came from a family who have suffered deeply from oppressive policies in Ngaba. In 2008, his half-brother, Namtso monk Nying-la, was tortured in prison and released with critical

injuries, according to two Kirti monks in exile in Dharamsala, India. He died a few months later. According to local residents, Tsekho Tugchak had lately expressed concern about China's occupation of Tibet and repression of the Tibetan people and their culture.

This self-immolation, the 153rd in Tibet since 2009, happens at a time of heightened security across the plateau in the build-up to the sensitive anniversary of the 10 March Uprising in 1959, and the 10th anniversary of protests that swept across Tibet in 2008 on the same date. In line with what has become almost a ritual at this time of the year, there has been a series of [intimidating military drills](#) taking place across the plateau, and the presence of [massed ranks of troops in riot gear at peaceful prayer festivals](#), giving the impression of a war zone.



Clips from Chinese state media showing military drills in Lhasa on 2 March 2018.

CHINESE POLICE CIRCULAR URGES PUBLIC TO REPORT ON LOYALTY TO 'EVIL FORCES' OF DALAI LAMA

CHINESE POLICE HAVE ISSUED A CIRCULAR URGING THE PUBLIC TO INFORM ON PEOPLE THEY SUSPECT OF BEING LOYAL TO THE DALAI LAMA AND HIS "EVIL FORCES" ACROSS TIBET.

The circular ([unofficial translation by China Law Translate](#)) published by the Public Security Bureau of the Tibet Autonomous Region on 7 February, details 22 illegal activities the bureau wants the public to report, with a specific emphasis on the Dalai Lama in at least three of them, and a warning about the "foreign hostile forces" loyal to him. Illegal behaviour specified includes support for the Dalai Lama's moderate 'Middle Way' approach that calls for respect for a genuine autonomy for Tibet while acknowledging China's sovereignty.

Targeting "underworld forces" that are a "chronic disease that is loathed by the people", the circular states that the public should report monasteries that are "using religion to control, to confuse, to incite, or coerce the masses to resist the Party and government". Consistent with a trend in Tibet of making everyday and often devotional activities illegal, the circular also effectively criminalises those who seek to encourage the use of the Tibetan language or protect Tibetan culture, calling this a "reactionary and narrow nationalistic idea".

Matteo Mecacci, President of the International Campaign for Tibet, said: "The circular published in Tibet calling on Tibetans to denounce each other in order to undermine the most revered Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, is a reminder of the totalitarian and extreme rule that the Chinese Communist party continues to impose in Tibet. Only a government consumed by fear and paranoia treats all its citizens as part of its security apparatus."

POLITICAL PRISONER FOCUS

LODOE GYATSO

A FORMER PRISONER WHO CONTINUED TO PROTEST WHILE IN PRISON DESPITE BEING SUBJECTED TO SEVERE TORTURE, LODOE GYATSO, HAS BEEN DETAINED AGAIN AFTER APPARENTLY CARRYING OUT A SOLO DEMONSTRATION OUTSIDE THE POTALA PALACE IN LHASA ON 28 JANUARY.



According to exile sources, Lodoe Gyatso, who has served over 20 years in prison and had a death sentence commuted, is again in detention after he released a video message announcing his plan of staging a protest calling for world peace. He described his action as part of a long campaign of non-violent Tibetan protest (English translation of the video message by ICT available [here](#)). A Tibetan source told Radio Free Asia that Lodoe Gyatso is now being held in custody in his home county of Sog (Chinese: Suo)

in Nagchu (Naqu) prefecture in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Lodoe Gyatso, who was severely tortured in prison and who is known for his mental and physical toughness, carried out his first protest in Lhasa's Drapchi prison in 1995. He had been serving a 15-year prison term for killing a man who had attacked him, but during his incarceration met various political prisoners who inspired him to protest inside prison.

CARTOON BY FIFI

Belgian cartoonist Fifi's take on Mercedes Benz's apology to the Chinese authorities for using a Dalai Lama quote on its Instagram page (more on this story at <https://www.savetibet.org/mercedes-benz-apologizes-for-use-of-dalai-lama-quote-helping-beijing-to-export-its-censorship-worldwide/>)



UPCOMING EVENTS

25 APRIL 2018:

Protest in front of the Chinese Embassy in Brussels (10h-11h30, Avenue de Tervueren 443-445) on the occasion of the 29th birthday of the Panchen Lama

NOVEMBER 2018:

China's third cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the United Nations Human Rights Council

READING SUGGESTIONS

• **AUTHORITARIAN ADVANCE: RESPONDING TO CHINA'S GROWING POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN EUROPE**

In this new substantial report published by the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPI) and the Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS) in February 2018, researchers examine how China is increasingly succeeding in gaining political influence and exporting its authoritarian ideals to Europe through a number of efforts across three key arenas – political and economic elites, media and public opinion, and civil society and academia. The report also suggests a response strategy for Europe, including a stronger focus on leveraging the collective weight of EU member states and investing more resources into independent China expertise. The report is a wake-up call regarding China's pervasive influencing efforts on the continent and well worth reading! [Click here](#) to download the report.

• **TWO MORE YEARS, BY TENDAR TSERING**

Every year hundreds of Tibetans flee from Tibet. For many of them, getting to see the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, or the opportunity to study under the guidance of the Tibetan spiritual leader is their lifelong dream. For that they risk their lives crossing the Himalayan Mountains, in perilous journeys that last weeks, if not months. Tendar Tsering dedicates his book to Kelsang Namtso, who was killed by the Chinese border patrol in 2006. Many Tibetans fleeing Tibet often become victims of the Chinese border patrol, or die in anonymity of frostbite or hunger during their perilous journey. Tendar Tsering is one of them. Aged just 12, he made the difficult decision to leave his family in Tibet and cross the Himalayan Mountains to study in India. This is the story of his life since.

EDITOR: CreateSpace;

PUBLICATION DATE: 12 November 2017.

[Click here](#) to buy this book