



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### China should allow the Panchen Lama to speak for himself

Read online: <https://savetibet.org/china-should-allow-the-panchen-lama-to-speak-for-himself>

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*Independent investigators must determine what happened to the Panchen Lama after his abduction in 1995*

Today the Chinese government was forced to provide new, but still unverified, information about the whereabouts of the Panchen Lama, one of the highest spiritual leaders in Tibetan Buddhism. Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was abducted by the Chinese government 25 years ago, just three days after he - a six year old Tibetan boy - was recognized by the Dalai Lama. In response to a question about US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's strong statement (issued on May 18), the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said today that he had "passed the college entrance examination and now has a job." The spokesperson further claimed that neither he nor his family wishes to be disturbed in their "current normal lives."

The Panchen Lama is now an adult, and according to the Chinese Constitution the Chinese government has to respect his personal dignity. The 31-year old Panchen Lama should be given his constitutional right to speak for himself and to enjoy all the rights of citizens under articles 33 to 39 of the Chinese Constitution.

Governments and UN Human Rights Mechanisms, including the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearance, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Special Rapporteurs, as well as a number of governments have for decades consistently asked the Chinese government to provide verifiable information about the whereabouts of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and to have independent access to him.

The Chinese government has never allowed anyone to meet the Panchen Lama, contravening all its international obligations and commitments fueling fears and speculations as to whether he is still alive. The Chinese government should now follow up on today's statement by both allowing the Panchen Lama to speak for himself freely and without restrictions, and by allowing an international and independent investigation to ascertain what happened to him after he disappeared over 25 years ago.



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