



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Penpa Tsering to take over as next Tibetan political leader

<https://savetibet.org/penpa-tsering-to-take-over-as-next-tibetan-political-leader>

May 14, 2021

The Tibetan Election Commission formally declared former Speaker Penpa Tsering as the next president of the Central Tibetan Administration, which provides democratic governance for Tibetans in exile. The president is known as the “sikyong” in the Tibetan language.

In its announcement today, May 14, the Commission said there was a voter turnout of 63,991 (77.02 %) out of a total number of 83,080 registered voters, making this the highest turnout in the history of Tibetan elections in exile.

Penpa secured 34,324 votes, while the only other candidate in the fray, Kelsang Dorjee Aukatsang, secured 28,907 in a closely fought election worldwide on April 11, 2021.

In addition to having served as speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Penpa had also served as representative at the Office of Tibet in Washington, DC.

In his remarks to the media today, Sikyong-elect Penpa Tsering said the successful elections are a victory and a pride for Tibetan democracy. He said there was much to be done, primarily the resolution of the “just cause of the Tibetans and welfare of the Tibetan society.” He said it was his hope that after taking his oath, he will be able to open “a new chapter” in resolving the Tibetan problem and developing Tibetan society.

Sikyong Lobsang Sangay issued a video message congratulating the Sikyong-elect on behalf of the Kashag (Cabinet). Similarly, Kelsang Aukatsang also congratulated Penpa.

Tibetan exile democracy

Tibetans in exile living in over 30 countries go to the polls every five years to elect both the sikyong and the members of the parliament.

In the two-stage election system—which does not have political parties—the Tibetan diaspora directly determine candidates for their sikyong and legislators during the primary election. After refining the preliminary candidates, the final election determines the political leader and legislators for the next five years.

Since the devolution of political power by [His Holiness the Dalai Lama](#) in 2011, the recently concluded election for sikyong and the legislators is the third general election for Tibetan political leadership. Lobsang Sangay secured the popular votes during the first two direct elections for sikyong.

Parliamentarians elected from the West

Thondup Tsering from Massachusetts and Tenzing Jigme from Minnesota have been elected as representatives of Tibetans from the Americas.

Thupten Wangchen from Spain and Thupten Gyatso from France were elected to represent Tibetans from Europe, while Tenzin Phuntsok Doring from Australia was elected to represent Australasia and other regions of Asia (excluding India, Nepal and Bhutan).

Tibetans' exile elections stand in stark contrast to China's rule in their homeland of Tibet, where the Chinese government denies any democratic freedoms to the Tibetan people and severely violates their [human rights](#).

The International Campaign for Tibet congratulates the Tibetan exile community for once again completing this democratic process. We look forward to the day when the Dalai Lama's vision of democracy can finally take root in Tibet.



International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) | 1825 Jefferson Place NW | Washington, DC 20036 | United States of America
Phone: (202) 785-1515 | Fax: (202) 785-4343 | info@savetibet.org

ICT Europe
Funenpark 1D | 1018 AK
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266
icteurope@savetibet.nl

ICT Deutschland e.V.
Schönhauser Allee 163 | 10435
Berlin, Germany
Phone: +49 (0)30 27879086
Fax: +49 (0)30 27879087
info@savetibet.de

ICT Brussels
11, rue de la linière | 1060
Brussels, Belgium
Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32
info@savetibet.eu