

## PENPA TSERING ELECTED AS NEW PRESIDENT OF TIBETANS IN EXILE

PENPA TSERING HAS TAKEN OVER FROM LOBSANG SANGAY AS THE NEW SIKYONG (PRESIDENT) OF THE CENTRAL TIBETAN ADMINISTRATION, WHICH PROVIDES DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE FOR TIBETANS IN EXILE.



On 14 May, The Tibetan Election Commission formally declared Penpa Tsering as the winner of the second round of the Tibetan elections in exile that took place worldwide on 11 April. According to the Commission, the voter turnout was 77.02% - the highest in the history of Tibetan elections in exile.

Penpa – who previously served as speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and as representative at the Office of Tibet in Washington, DC - is the third directly elected Tibetan leader since the devolution of political authority by the Dalai Lama in 2011. He took the oath of office at the end of May in a simple ceremony in Dharamsala attended by only a select group of dignitaries due to COVID-19 lockdown rules in India. The Dalai Lama also joined the occasion virtually and lauded Tibetan democracy, commended the outgoing Sikyong Lobsang Sangay for his service and

extended his best wishes to Penpa.

Following the formal ceremony, Penpa made a separate [inaugural speech](#) in which he outlined focus areas for his term, namely the resolution of the Sino-Tibetan conflict, strengthening of the democratic polity and the socio-economic welfare of the community.

Congratulations for Penpa were sent from around the world, including from Tibet Support Groups and members of parliamentarians – including the European Parliament's Tibet Interest Group.

The International Campaign for Tibet also offers our "Tashi Delek" and most heartfelt congratulations to Penpa, and looks forward to working with his administration to fulfill the vision of the Dalai Lama and the aspirations of the Tibetan people.



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INTERNATIONAL  
CAMPAIGN  
FOR TIBET

#### ICT EUROPE

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

#### ICT BRUSSELS

15, rue de la linière  
1060 Brussels  
Belgium  
Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10  
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32  
[info@savetibet.eu](mailto:info@savetibet.eu)

#### ICT GERMANY

Schonhauser Allee 163  
10435 Berlin  
Germany  
Tel.: +49 (0)30 27879086  
Fax: +49 (0)30 27879087  
[info@savetibet.de](mailto:info@savetibet.de)

#### ICT

1825 Jefferson Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
United States of America  
Phone: +1 (1) 202-785-1515  
Fax: [202] 785-434  
[info@savetibet.org](mailto:info@savetibet.org)

## EU-US SUMMIT JOINT STATEMENT RAISES TIBET HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

FOLLOWING THEIR SUMMIT HELD ON 15 JUNE IN BRUSSELS, THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE UNITED STATES UNDERLINED THEIR SHARED CONCERNS ABOUT CHINA'S HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, INCLUDING IN TIBET.



Ursula von der Leyen, Joe Biden and Charles Michel at the EU-US Summit on 15 June. (Photo: European Commission)

respective but "similar" multi-faceted approaches to China, and to "continue coordinating on our shared concerns, including ongoing human rights violations in Xinjiang and Tibet; the erosion of autonomy and democratic processes in Hong Kong; economic coercion; disinformation campaigns; and regional security issues."

*"When it comes to human rights and human dignity we are systemic rivals," Ursula von der Leyen said about China at the [press conference](#) following the summit. "We have to speak out on that and it is very clear that it is the main issue that clearly divides us."*

This was the new US president Joe Biden's first visit to Europe after his election, as well as the first summit between the EU and US during his presidency. The European Parliament has called on the EU to increase its coordination and cooperation with the US in the framework of a Transatlantic Dialogue on China, including a coordinated approach on measures to address human rights violations.

[Click here to read the EU-US Summit statement.](#)

In a joint declaration issued after the summit, Brussels and Washington vowed to "closely consult and cooperate" on their

## ICT, MPS CALL FOR DIPLOMATIC BOYCOTT OF THE 2022 WINTER OLYMPICS IN CHINA

THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET IS CALLING ON GOVERNMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO ADOPT A PUBLIC POSITION BEFORE THE 2022 WINTER OLYMPICS ON THE URGENT NEED FOR CHINA TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA, XINJIANG, TIBET, AND HONG KONG.

In a written submission for a joint hearing of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China last May, ICT said that the decision to award the Olympics to Beijing "was a mistake which ignored the downward spiral of human rights-related developments." ICT has joined calls for the International Olympic Committee to act on its obligation to verify that China abides by its code of ethics and commitments, and for governments to commit to a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Games if China does not comply.

On Olympic Day on 23 June, ICT also participated in a "Global Day of Action" among Chinese human rights defenders, Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hong Kongers, Southern

Mongolians and Taiwanese, who protested together worldwide (including in Brussels) to show their opposition to the Games in light of China's massive human rights violations.



Calls for a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympics are also mounting amongst parliamentarians worldwide. In a statement launching a series of coordinated legislative actions on this issue, [the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China said](#) that the Games are a shared celebration of sport, friendship and solidarity" that cannot be reconciled with holding them "in a country whose government stands credibly accused of

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perpetrating atrocity crimes against its own population. To do so discredits the ethos of the Olympic movement and undermines its purpose.” On 10 June, the Senate of the

Czech Republic also [adopted](#) a resolution calling on Czech political leaders and representatives to boycott the Games, in view of China’s “massive” human rights

violations, including in Tibet.

[Click here to read ICT’s full written submission for the hearing.](#)

## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT FREEZES COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT ON INVESTMENT WITH CHINA

**IN A NEW SIGN OF THE STRAINED EU-CHINA RELATIONS, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HAS DECIDED TO FREEZE THE EU-CHINA COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT ON INVESTMENTS (CAI).**

The move was triggered by [Beijing’s imposition of sanctions](#) last March on a number of EU entities, academics and lawmakers (including five Members of the European Parliament) which was itself a response to EU sanctions imposed over a number of Chinese officials for their human rights abuses against Uyghurs.

In a strongly worded [resolution](#) adopted on 20 May with an overwhelming majority, Members of the Parliament

described the Chinese countersanctions as an unjustified attack on fundamental freedoms and democratic life of the EU and its Member States, and demanded “that China lift the sanctions before Parliament can deal with the CAI, without prejudice to the final outcome of the CAI ratification process”. They also reminded the European Commission that they would take the human rights situation in China into account when asked to endorse the CAI.

The resolution also highlights “the gradual move of the Chinese Communist Party leadership towards a confrontational approach, including the targeting of the EU with disinformation and cyber attacks.” It also reiterates the European Parliament’s “most serious concern” about the various human rights abuses in China - including the persecution of ethnic and religious groups like Uyghurs, Tibetans and Mongols – and demands that Member States’ extradition treaties with China be suspended.

## GERMAN PARLIAMENT COMMITTEE ASKS CHINA TO RESPECT TIBETAN HUMAN RIGHTS

**ON 19 MAY, THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE IN THE GERMAN PARLIAMENT ISSUED A DECLARATION SHARPLY CRITICIZING THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY’S POLICIES IN TIBET.**

The declaration was passed with votes from the governing CDU/CSU and SPD, and opposition parties FDP and Alliance 90/The Greens, to commemorate the signing of the controversial 17-Point Agreement between China and Tibet.

“The committee calls on the Chinese government to immediately end the

repression against the Tibetan people and to resume dialogue with the legitimate representatives of the Tibetans,” the declaration said; “The committee will not cease in its commitment to repeatedly address these human rights violations and to vehemently demand an improvement in the human rights situation in China.”

The International Campaign for Tibet welcomes the committee’s clear statement and underlines the urgency of the situation in Tibet and the need for a solution based on the Dalai Lama’s Middle Way Approach.

[Click here to read an English translation of the declaration](#) (the original in German is available here).

## CHINESE CRACKDOWN ON PROMINENT ACTIVISTS ACROSS SERTHAR

IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A CRACKDOWN ON ACTIVISTS IN EASTERN TIBET, CHINESE SECURITY OFFICERS HAVE RECENTLY DETAINED SIX TIBETANS ACROSS SERTHAR COUNTY, IN SICHUAN PROVINCE.



Seynam, Drubpa Kyab, Yudrum and Tsering Dolma.

Of the six detainees, the identities of only four are known. On 23 March 2021, Chinese security authorities arrested Seynam (also known as Ruepa), Drubpa Kyab and Yudrum. All three were detained around 5:30 pm local time in different locations in Serthar County. Tsering Dolma and the other two unidentified Tibetans were detained

in Tibet.

Seynam, a teacher, writer and advocate for Tibetan education and environmental conservation, was for example briefly detained in September 2020 for attending a community “Forum on the wellbeing of parents of the land of snows”. Tsering Dolma

separately between 31 March and 2 April.

All four identified detainees have previously been detained or imprisoned for peaceful expression of their political or social beliefs. Each had actively spoken out against the repressive Chinese government policies

was first detained together with her father in 2008, for participating in the spring 2008 pan-Tibet uprising against China’s rule in Tibet, and was detained again in 2012. (More information about each individual is available in our report [here](#)).

Although sources in exile have confirmed their detentions, the reason behind this string of targeted detentions remains unknown. ICT believes that Chinese security authorities may have launched a preemptive “stability maintenance” drive to crack down on Tibetan activists prior to the forthcoming centennial anniversary of the Communist Party of China in July.

The International Campaign for Tibet is concerned about the detention of these six Tibetans, as their incarceration is most likely connected to political activism or simply the expression of independent thought.

## TIBETANS IN LHASA TOLD TO RESTRICT RELIGIOUS PRACTICE DURING HOLY MONTH

THE STATE-CONTROLLED LHASA CITY BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION HAS URGED TIBETAN BUDDHISTS IN THE TIBETAN CAPITAL TO RESTRICT THEIR TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICE DURING THE HOLY MONTH OF SAGA DAWA, WHICH BEGAN ON 12 MAY.

While the [association’s notice](#), issued on 9 May, did not ban religious rituals outright, it called on Tibetans “not to go for circumambulation around the Potala, Barkor and Lingkor” and “to go on pilgrimages to nearest and most convenient locations” and on monasteries to “undertake the routine religious activities in the simplest way possible.” Radio Free Asia also [reported](#) that

visiting hours to Lhasa’s Jokhang temple were sharply cut down to just three and a half hours for Buddhists practitioners, while the major pilgrimage site was open twice as long for tourists.

The 9 May notice cites the reason for the limitations as being the “very significant” risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19,

given the situation in “some neighboring countries” and “imported cases” continuing to appear in China itself.

These warnings have come even though the Chinese government has not stopped Chinese tourists from visiting Tibet. In fact, it boasted a rise in tourism during the pandemic. The state media

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# TIBET BRIEF

JUNE 2021

A REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

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outlet Xinhua [reported on 7 May](#) that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of tourists traveling to the Tibet Autonomous Region “surged in the first quarter of this year compared with the same period of 2019.”

Chinese authorities therefore seem to be using the pandemic situation as a pretext to further reduce space in which Tibetan Buddhists can practice their faith. In past years, the Chinese authorities have already [imposed restrictions](#) on Tibetan Buddhists’ religious activities during Saga Dawa.



Pilgrims in Lhasa. (Photo: Richard Mortel-CC-BY-2.0).

## POLITICAL PRISONER FOCUS

### RINCHEN TSULTRIM

**IN EARLY 2020, RINCHEN TSULTRIM WAS SENTENCED TO FOUR AND A HALF YEARS IN PRISON APPARENTLY FOR PEACEFULLY EXPRESSING HIS VIEWS ON THE CHINESE SOCIAL MEDIA WECHAT, ACCORDING TO NEW INFORMATION CONFIRMED BY TIBETAN SOURCES IN EXILE.**



The 29-year-old monk had previously [been held in detention incommunicado for over a year](#) since the fall of 2019. On 26 March this year, the Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) Public Security Bureau told Rinchen’s family that he had been sentenced to four years and six months, and he is being held in a prison in the city of Chengdu. Although Rinchen’s

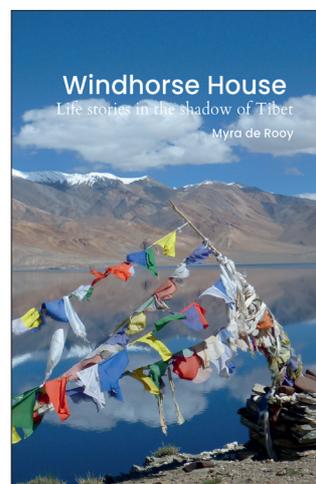
prison term is now known, no details could be confirmed as to the charges, his trial date and the court that passed the judgment.

In 2018, Rinchen was formally warned twice by the county public security bureau to stop expressing critical opinions of Chinese policies online. His personal website titled ‘skepticism on Tibet’ (in Tibetan) was shut down. He was also under surveillance - both online and offline.

The International Campaign for Tibet believes that he has been charged with “incitement to split the country”, and is concerned that Rinchen has been detained solely for peacefully expressing his views. ICT calls for his immediate release; his family and lawyers should be granted access to him, and he should receive adequate medical treatment if needed.

## READING SUGGESTION

### WINDHORSE HOUSE - LIFE STORIES IN THE SHADOW OF TIBET, BY MYRA DE ROOY



speaks with their families. Myra’s travels to Lhasa, passing through villages, nomad tents and monasteries bring the stories of these refugees to life.

A geologist, mountaineer and writer, Myra de Rooy previously worked for ICT for more than 15 years. Fascinated by the mountain world and its inhabitants, she made many solo trips to remote areas in Tibet, Ladakh, Nepal and Scandinavia. Windhorse House has previously appeared in Dutch. ICT has made this English translation possible so that the stories of these ex-political prisoners are known worldwide.

In Dharamsala, the Dalai Lama’s place of exile, Myra de Rooy meets eight Tibetan ex-political prisoners. These Tibetans tell their poignant life story: they did not submit to the Chinese occupation and showed courage and persistence. Their testimonies shed light on recent Tibetan history in the shadow of Chinese rule. The writer visits their native land in Tibet and

[Click here](#) to buy this book. (NB: the page is in Dutch but the book is an English translation of the Dutch version that was published a few years ago).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **21 JUNE-15 JULY:** 47<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council and adoption of Nepal's Universal Periodic Review report (8 July)
- **1 JULY:** Start of the Slovenian EU Presidency
- **1 JULY:** 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party
- **6 JULY:** His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 86<sup>th</sup> birthday

## TIBET TALKS

### TIBET TALKS EUROPE #12: CHINA'S INFLUENCE ON NEPAL AND ITS IMPACT ON TIBETANS

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET  
presents

## TIBET TALKS EUROPE

### China's influence on Nepal and its impact on Tibetans

Nepal has long been a refuge and a transit point for Tibetans fleeing the Chinese repression. But in the last few years, the growing Chinese influence on its Himalayan neighbour, and the increased cooperation between the two countries - including on matters related to national security - has increased the vulnerability of Tibetans living in the country, who lack legal status and face considerable restrictions of their rights and freedoms.

What is the nature of the relationship between China and Nepal, and what are Beijing's interests in this country? And what is the situation of Tibetans in Nepal?

To answer these questions, ICT's EU Policy Director Vincent Metten discussed with French journalist Brice Pedroletti, who recently published an article on this issue.

**This episode of Tibet Talks Europe will be released (in French with English subtitles) on :**

[www.savetibet.nl/live](https://www.savetibet.nl/live)

ICT Brussels' Facebook page

on 8 July on the occasion of the adoption of Nepal's Universal Periodic Review report at the UN Human Rights Council.

Guest speaker:



**Brice Pedroletti**  
Ex-China bureau chief  
in Beijing and Asia  
desk for Le Monde

Moderator:



**Vincent Metten**  
EU Policy Director,  
International Campaign  
for Tibet Europe

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