



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

US Tibet coordinator meets Dalai Lama, Tibetans in India

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The US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues met the Dalai Lama and Tibetan leadership, experienced Tibetan culture and sent a message to China about US support for Tibet during her trip to Dharamsala, India last week.

Uzra Zeya visited Dharamsala May 18-19. The northern Indian town serves as the exile home of the [Dalai Lama](#) and headquarters of the Central Tibetan Administration, which [provides democratic governance for Tibetans](#) living outside China's illegal occupation of their country.

In a meeting at his residence, Zeya told the Dalai Lama: "I bring [greetings from our president](#) and from the American people, and the best wishes for your good health and our gratitude for your message of peace for the world."

Zeya also met with Sikyong Penpa Tsering and other Tibetan leaders, civil servants, schoolchildren, monastics, artists and more.

It was her first visit to Dharamsala since [becoming Special Coordinator in December 2021](#) amid growing momentum in [US support for the Tibetan people](#). Zeya serves concurrently as the Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights.

"Special Coordinator Zeya's visit to Dharamsala was a boon to the Tibetan cause and the Tibetan people both inside and outside Tibet," said Tencho Gyatso, Interim Vice President of the International Campaign for Tibet, who was in Dharamsala during Zeya's trip. *"By meeting with His Holiness and elected Tibetan leaders, and exploring Tibetan Buddhism and culture, Zeya sent a clear message about US support for the Tibetan people's legitimate aspirations for [human rights](#) and democratic freedoms.*

"We look forward to seeing the US government build on the Special Coordinator's visit with new initiatives to help resolve the Tibetan issue."

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During a meeting with the US' Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, His Holiness the Dalai Lama expressed his confidence that #China, despite 60 years of occupying #Tibet, has failed to change the minds of the Tibetan people

Meeting Tibetans

Zeya had many interactions with Tibetans during her time in Dharamsala:

- Penpa Tsering, the Sikyong (President) of the Central Tibetan Administration, welcomed Zeya and the other members of the US delegation on their arrival. Penpa previously met with Zeya during his [visit last month to Washington, DC](#), where he engaged top US officials and built crucial support for Tibet.
- The Kashag (cabinet) and other Central Tibetan Administration officials met with Zeya, as did the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, including Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel.
- Zeya took in Tibetan culture by visiting the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, the Tibet Museum, the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, and the Norbulingka Institute, which seeks to preserve and continue Tibetan art through self-sustaining means.
- Zeya met with schoolchildren at a Tibetan Children’s Village school; and with monks at the Gyuto Monastery.
- Ordinary Tibetans also interacted with Zeya, greeting her in the streets with Tibetan, Indian and American flags and presenting her with khatas, Tibetan traditional greeting scarves.

Along with Zeya, other members of the US delegation included USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator Anjali Kaur and Chargé d’Affaires Patricia Lacina from the US Embassy in New Delhi.

TWITTER:

[Sikyong Penpa Tsering \(@SikyongPTsering\)](#)

Incredibly honoured to host @UnderSecStateJ, US Special Coordinator for the Tibetan Issues' first official visit to the Central Tibetan Administration today, reaffirming the US commitment to the cause of Tibet. Thank you, @UnderSecStateJ & delegates, for making this long trip.

Dalai Lama meeting

One of the highlights of their visit was meeting the Dalai Lama at his residence.

“It is my greatest honor to be able to be received by you,” Zeya told His Holiness.

The Dalai Lama said he was “very happy” meeting with them.

“As human brothers, sisters, we all have two eyes, one nose,” he said. “So we are the same,” he added, laughing.

The Dalai Lama praised the United States and India for their democracy and freedoms. He said he is committed to promoting religious harmony, as well as preserving Tibetan community and culture in India and in Tibet.

His Holiness stated that China has failed to change the minds of the Tibetan people. Since [forcing him into exile over 60 years ago](#), the Chinese government has ruled Tibet with an iron fist, turning it into the [least-free country on Earth](#) in a tie with South Sudan and Syria, according to the watchdog group Freedom House.

Despite decades of oppression, China still lacks legitimacy in Tibet, with the Tibetan people continuing to call for [meaningful autonomy](#) and basic rights.

“It’s quite clear that [efforts to] change Tibetans’ mind have completely failed by Chinese Communists,” His Holiness told the US delegation. “Meanwhile China themselves, now their thinking is rapidly changing.”

Watch the Dalai Lama meet the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues:

<https://youtu.be/fAo2JF-eCuE>

India, Nepal and China

Before arriving in Dharamsala, Zeya met with Indian officials in New Delhi.

She later traveled to Nepal, May 20-22 where [she met with the Prime Minister](#) Sher Bahadur Deuba and other senior government officials, as well as [members of the Tibetan refugee community](#). A Nepali government official [is quoted in media reports](#) as saying, “The Tibetan refugees in Nepal are facing some problems and the government is considering ways to address their grievances.”

Zeya’s trip received a predictably outraged response from China.

The US government has made clear in recent years that Tibet is a core interest of the United States, with US leaders [pushing China to resume negotiations with Tibetan representatives](#) after over a decade without dialogue.



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