



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

World celebrates Dalai Lama's 87th birthday

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World leaders, Nobel laureates, spiritual teachers, professional athletes, human rights advocates, Tibetans and countless others celebrated across the globe on July 6, 2022 as the Dalai Lama turned 87.

India's Prime Minister, the United States' Speaker of the House and Secretary of State and the Czech Republic's Foreign Minister were among the officials who publicly shared their well wishes for the Dalai Lama on his birthday.

The Sikyong (President) of the Central Tibetan Administration helped lead a [massive celebration for the Dalai Lama](#) in the Tibetan exile capital of Dharamsala, India.

[International Campaign for Tibet Chairman Richard Gere](#) spoke at the event, telling Tibetans in the crowd that, "you should be so proud, so proud.

"Once not in a lifetime, once in a millennium, maybe once in two millenniums, such a person, such a human being as the Dalai Lama emerges. And he's a Tibetan," Gere said to loud applause.

ICT asked its members to celebrate His Holiness' birthday by [sharing a wish for peace](#). The organization's members responded, sharing more than 5,400 wishes online.

ICT also [published a video](#) asking His Holiness' followers to remember his [four commitments](#) on his birthday. The commitments are promoting human values, promoting religious harmony, preserving the Tibetan language and culture and reviving ancient Indian wisdom.

'Truth on our side'

The Dalai Lama himself marked his 87th birthday by [inaugurating the Dalai Lama Library and Archives](#) in Dharamsala, which will expand his incredible legacy of spreading and sustaining Tibetan culture and knowledge in exile.

"At a certain point the whole question of Tibet seemed about to vanish like a rainbow," His Holiness said at the inauguration ceremony, "but we set up schools and re-established our monasteries so that today Tibetan culture, religion and language thrive in exile.

"When I first went to the US, I was invited to visit the Congress. One of the members asserted that China has millions of soldiers, while the Dalai Lama is just one man, but they can't overcome him. The point is, we have never told lies; we have the truth on our side.

“For years, I’ve worked sincerely, respecting the law of causality. The issue of Tibet is not just a political matter, it’s a question of truth.”

Indian support

The Dalai Lama also spoke to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his birthday.

“Conveyed 87th birthday greetings to His Holiness the @DalaiLama over phone earlier today,” [Modi tweeted](#). “We pray for his long life and good health.”

This was the second year in a row that Modi announced on social media that he called the Dalai Lama on his birthday. When Modi [called His Holiness last year](#), it was reportedly the first time in years that he publicly acknowledged speaking with the Dalai Lama.

Many other Indian officials also shared their good wishes for His Holiness as he turned 87, including Jai Ram Thakur, [Chief Minister of the state of Himachal Pradesh](#)—where Dharamsala is located—who was the chief guest at the celebration in Dharamsala.

Meenakshi Lekhi, [Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture of India](#), and Arvind Kejriwal, [Chief Minister of Delhi](#), also praised His Holiness on his birthday.

Resolving China-Tibet conflict

The Indian support met with a petulant response from the Chinese government, which has [brutally occupied Tibet for over 60 years](#) and forced the Dalai Lama into exile in India in 1959.

Lashing out at both Indian and US leaders for celebrating the Dalai Lama’s birthday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian reportedly said, “Tibet affairs are China’s internal affairs, which brooks no foreign interference. China is firmly against any engagement by any country with the 14th Dalai Lama.”

Zhao was not only being hypocritical by complaining about foreign interference while trying to interfere in other countries’ engagement with His Holiness; he was also being deceitful about Tibet’s legal status.

Tibet is not an internal affair of China. Instead, the Chinese government is occupying Tibet in violation of international law and denying the Tibetan people their right to self-determination.

China has also [refused to negotiate with the Dalai Lama’s representatives since 2010](#). Despite this, the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people have remained committed to resolving the issue of Tibet through dialogue and [nonviolence](#).

With the Dalai Lama now 87, China should take advantage of the opportunity to reach a lasting agreement with Tibetans by quickly resuming negotiations with His Holiness’ envoys.

Recently, US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., announced [new bipartisan legislation that will push for a peaceful resolution to Tibet’s status](#). McGovern said the

upcoming bill will “help the US government counter Chinese disinformation on Tibet and assure that US policy supports the basis for the [Dalai Lama’s quest for genuine autonomy](#)” for Tibetans.

US leaders

On the Dalai Lama’s birthday, [Speaker Pelosi](#)—a longtime champion of the Tibetan people—shared her gratitude for His Holiness in a Twitter thread.

“It is with great admiration that I join millions in sending warm birthday wishes to His Holiness The @DalaiLama — a beacon of hope for the Tibetan people and a force for compassion in the face of oppression,” Pelosi wrote. “Today, and every day, the Congress remains unwavering in our bipartisan, bicameral gratitude for His Holiness’ inspiring leadership, and we continue to stand with him in the struggle for true religious, linguistic and cultural freedom in Tibet.”

[Rep. McGovern, who is Co-Chair of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China](#), issued a statement alongside the Commission’s Chair, Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Wash.

“The Chairs wish the @DalaiLama a happy 87th birthday,” they said. “His message of compassion, non-violence & protecting the environment is inspiring and so very needed in our world today. We stand with all #Tibetans seeking to protect their culture and identity & to defend religious freedom.

The [Commission](#) also called on China to “release all #Tibetans detained for sharing his teachings or simply possessing his picture.”

The [US Secretary of State, Antony J. Blinken](#), also wished the Dalai Lama a happy birthday.

“His Holiness brings light to his fellow Tibetans and so many around the world by promoting peace, encouraging inter-faith harmony, and advocating for the preservation of Tibetan language and culture,” Blinken said in a statement. “I admire His Holiness’s ongoing commitment to non-violence to resolve the grievances of the Tibetan community.”

[US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Rashad Hussain](#) tweeted that, “His Holiness inspires me and countless others with his good nature, wit, and commitment to Tibetan Buddhist traditions and practice. He is a champion of religious freedom, and the best gift we can offer is to advocate for this right for all.”

[Under Secretary of State Uzra Zeya](#), who [serves as the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues](#), took part in a [celebration for the Dalai Lama’s birthday](#) jointly hosted by the Office of Tibet, the Capital Area Tibetan Association and the International Campaign for Tibet in Washington, DC. Other speakers included Namgyal Choedup, His Holiness’ Representative to North America, and Kasur Kirti Rinpoche, former minister and head of the Kirti monastic community.

Zeya, who [met with the Dalai Lama](#) in Dharamsala in May, spoke at the event about the need to resume dialogue between Chinese and Tibetan leaders.

Around the world

The Dalai Lama also received well wishes from European leaders on his birthday.

Jan Lipavský, the [Czech Republic's Minister of Foreign Affairs](#), said, "Happy Birthday to His Holiness Dalai Lama. May his thoughts continue to be an inspiration for a better world."

Mikuláš Peksa, [Chair of the European Parliament's Tibet Interest Group](#), said, "Let's remind ourselves that it is a right of the people of Tibet to recognise his reincarnation, and it should be allowed to happen without any interference from the Chinese government." Peksa appeared to be referring to [China's outrageous plan to select the next Dalai Lama](#), which countries around the world have already denounced.

Engin Eroglu, a [Member of the European Parliament from Germany](#), described the Dalai Lama as "a symbol of strength in the face of persecution."

His Holiness also received praise from Michael Brand, [Chairman of the cross-party parliamentary group Tibet in the German Bundestag](#), and Luise Amtsberg, the [German Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Assistance](#).

In the United Kingdom, [Conservative Member of Parliament](#) Tim Loughton, who serves as co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet, appeared in a birthday video from the Global Alliance for Tibet & Persecuted Communities. Loughton compared the Dalai Lama to Queen Elizabeth II, who recently celebrated 70 years on the throne. "In good times and in bad, you have both been a symbol of continuity, of constancy, of strength and of peace," Loughton said. "And for that we give great thanks and congratulate you on everything you have achieved in such an eventful 87 years despite all the adversity."

In Australia, [Janet Rice, a Senator from Victoria](#), tweeted birthday greetings to the Dalai Lama, writing, "We hope this day is filled with happiness and love and wish him many more to come."

And in Canada, Arif Virani, a [Member of Parliament from Toronto](#) and a dedicated supporter of Tibet, shared a video message for His Holiness on Facebook.

Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hong Kongers, Chinese and Taiwanese

Tibetan exile leaders also wished the Dalai Lama a happy birthday.

Penpa, the [Sikyong \(President\) of the Central Tibetan Administration](#), which provides [democratic governance](#) for Tibetans in exile, said, "the Kashag [cabinet] on behalf of the Tibetans inside and outside Tibet pay our obeisance & greetings and pray that His Holiness remains the epitome of well-being of all sentient beings for aeons to come."

Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, [Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile](#), said, "I extend my heartiest greetings on the 87th birth anniversary of His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama. May His Holiness live a long and healthy life. May all his holy wishes be fulfilled."

Members of the Uyghur community, which is [facing genocide at the hands of the Chinese government](#), also voiced their support for the Dalai Lama.

[Stop Uyghur Genocide](#) said that, "Working with the Tibetan community is a true privilege. We hope celebrations this week are full of joy." And the [Ilham Tohti Initiative](#) tweeted a message sharing inspiration from His Holiness.

[Joey Siu, a Hongkongese American human rights advocate](#), also wished the Dalai Lama a happy birthday, saying he was, “Forever a staunch yet gentle force of compassion, resilience and wisdom. We have so much to learn from you.”

A few days before his birthday, the Dalai Lama took part virtually in a [celebration with devotees in Taiwan](#). Deputy Mayor of Taipei city Huang Shen Shen joined the celebration and extended birthday wishes to His Holiness.

The [US Embassy in China](#) also translated Secretary Blinken’s birthday wishes for His Holiness into Chinese.

Inside Tibet

According to [Radio Free Asia](#), the Chinese government tried to prevent any celebration of the Dalai Lama’s birthday inside Tibet.

RFA said that Chinese authorities beefed up security in Tibet, restricting travel and installing checkpoints. “Chinese authorities in the Himalayan region made everyone attend meetings to warn Tibetans not to share any kinds of photos and telling them that their cellphones will be checked for banned content,” RFA reported.

Despite this, Tibetans still found ways to celebrate, sources in Tibet told RFA. According to the sources, Tibetans held picnics on His Holiness’ birthday and made incense offerings on the tops of hills. Tibetans also wrote and shared articles praising His Holiness.

Last year, Chinese authorities reportedly [arrested 20-30 Tibetans for celebrating His Holiness’ birthday](#). There have been no reports of any arrests so far this year, but news from Tibet is slow to trickle out due to [China’s severe restrictions on access to Tibet](#).

According to RFA, the government of Nepal—which [faces enormous pressure from China](#) to crack down on Tibetan refugees—allowed a two-hour celebration of the Dalai Lama’s birthday at the Jawalakhel Tibetan Settlement, which is located near the capital Kathmandu and is home to more than 1,000 Tibetans.

Local media said that diplomats from the French, EU, Japanese and US embassies were among those who attended the celebration at the settlement center.

Athletes and artists

Athletes and artists also celebrated the Dalai Lama’s birthday.

With the Wimbledon tennis tournament in full swing, [former Wimbledon champion and tennis legend Leander Paes](#) posted his “Heartiest Birthday wishes” to the Dalai Lama on Facebook. Paes wrote that His Holiness “has inspired millions through his messages of peace and non violence. My sincere greetings!”

[India’s former football Captain Bhaichung Bhutia](#) described His Holiness as “one of the very few world icon and leader in today’s world. His teaching of peace and non violence is the need of an hour. I have been very fortunate to have been blessed by him few times.”

In addition, the [Muhammad Ali Center](#) shared a photo of the iconic boxer holding hands with His Holiness.

In the world of the arts, [Tsering Yangzom Lama, a Tibetan writer](#) whose recently released debut novel “We Measure the Earth with Our Bodies” has received widespread acclaim and attention, tweeted that the Dalai Lama is a “beacon of hope for 6 million Tibetans, many of whom cannot celebrate this day in occupied Tibet.”

[Amjad Ali Khan, a sarod player](#) and recipient of India’s second highest civilian award, said, “Wishing His Holiness The Dalai Lama a very Happy Birthday! With gratitude and in earnest prayer for his good health & long life.”

[Gene Simmons of the rock band Kiss](#) posted a photo of himself with the Dalai Lama along with a “Happy 87th Birthday” greeting.

And [actor Piper Perabo](#) wished His Holiness a happy birthday with an image of the Tibetan flag.

Nobel laureates and spiritual leaders

The Dalai Lama [received the Nobel Peace Prize](#) in 1989. On his 87th birthday, the [Nobel Prize organization](#) posted a quote from His Holiness: “When I meet people in different parts of the world, I am always reminded that we are all basically alike; we are all human beings.”

[Kailash Satyarthi, a fellow Nobel Peace Laureate](#), tweeted that, “Whenever I meet His Holiness The Dalai Lama (@DalaiLama), I see compassion walking in the human body.”

Spiritual teachers also celebrated the Dalai Lama’s birthday.

[His Eminence the 7th Kyabjé Yongzin Ling Rinpoche](#), recognized as the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama’s principal teacher, participated in the birthday events in Dharamsala. “Wishing His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama a very happy 87th birthday from H.E. Ling Rinpoche,” he tweeted. “May His Holiness live long and may all of His holy wishes and prayers be swiftly and perfectly fulfilled!”

Non-Tibetan teachers also celebrated.

[Jack Kornfield, who helped introduce mindfulness to the West](#), said the Dalai Lama is “an inspiration and a lamp, a beacon of understanding and compassion that lights the world. He treats everyone with interest, love and respect.”

[Tara Brach, a meditation teacher, psychologist and author](#), tweeted: “Sending all blessings to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for a joyful continuation day! May his message of kindness and peace bring healing to the suffering of the world!”

Security

Some of the most interesting birthday wishes for His Holiness came from security forces that have protected him over the years.

The [police of Himachal Pradesh](#), the Indian state where the Dalai Lama lives, said happy birthday to His Holiness on social media, writing, “Best wishes from Himachal Pradesh Police.”

The [US Diplomatic Security Service](#) also wished His Holiness a happy birthday, writing; “One of the most enlightening dignitary protection details for Diplomatic Security Service has been protecting the Dalai Lama during his official visits to the United States.”

Watch [part 1](#) and [part 2](#) of the Dalai Lama’s 87th birthday celebration at the Office of Tibet in Washington, DC.



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