



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### **Dalai Lama: COVID hardships should not make Tibetans 'disheartened'**

Read online: <https://savetibet.org/dalai-lama-covid-hardships-should-not-make-tibetans-disheartened>

October 4, 2022

The Dalai Lama has called on Tibetans not to feel disheartened amid the Chinese government's inhumane COVID-19 restrictions in Tibet, which have led to at least five suicides in the past two weeks.

Offering teachings to Taiwanese Buddhists in his exile home of Dharamsala, India today, Oct. 4, 2022, the Dalai Lama said: "Currently, it is reported that Tibetans inside Tibet are facing severe restrictions as a result of the coronavirus pandemic's spreading in Tibet. The public is facing great difficulties."

He added, "You do not need to feel disheartened when faced with temporary difficulties. We Tibetans have a unique karmic connection with Avalokiteshvara, who is our guardian deity. Therefore, you should pray to the three enlightened deities in Lhasa [Tibet's capital city]: Jowo Lokeshvara, Jowo Shakyamuni, and Jowo Akshobyavajra."

The Dalai Lama, who has lived in exile for over 60 years as China has illegally occupied Tibet, also told Tibetans that, "Although you are physically distant from me, since we have an uncommon connection based on our karma and prayers, you can think of me ..."

"What is most important is that you should feel at ease and trust that the truth will eventually prevail."

### **Inhumane COVID restrictions**

Since a COVID outbreak began in Tibet on Aug. 7, Tibetans have faced extreme lockdowns that have deprived them of food, work and psychological well-being.

Chinese authorities have manhandled and abused Tibetans and sent them to mass quarantine centers, where the healthy and sick are kept together in overcrowded facilities, allowing the virus to spread. Food in the centers is often unwashed and unhygienic.

The situation got so bad that the Lhasa City municipal government offered a rare public admission on Sept. 17 of mismanaging the pandemic, including through a lack of COVID testing capacity, inadequate garbage removal and cleaning services, cross-infections and inefficient staff.

However, China's "zero-COVID" policy in Tibet was not changed, nor were any significant changes made in its handling of the pandemic.

On Sept. 23 and 24, at least five Tibetans jumped to their deaths in Lhasa or its suburbs. Sources in Lhasa say the suicides occurred at mass quarantine sites or residential buildings under lockdown.

A closer analysis of the five suicides suggests that all were due to the extreme hardships endured under China's zero-COVID policy restrictions.

### **Dalai Lama message**

Below is the Dalai Lama's message to Tibetans experiencing severe COVID restrictions in Tibet. In addition to the pandemic, he speaks about the resilience of the Tibetan people, the spread of Tibetan Buddhism and the state of his own health:

“Currently, it is reported that Tibetans inside Tibet are facing severe restrictions as a result of the coronavirus pandemic's spreading in Tibet. The public is facing great difficulties.

“To some extent, the Tibet-China struggle is linked to the Buddha's teaching. The Chinese can never change the mindset and behaviour of the Tibetan people, which are rooted in their religion and culture. Rather, the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and its associated culture will gradually spread further and further into China itself.

“You do not need to feel disheartened when faced with temporary difficulties. We Tibetans have a unique karmic connection with Avalokiteshvara, who is our guardian deity. Therefore, you should pray to the three enlightened deities in Lhasa: Jowo Lokeshvara, Jowo Shakyamuni, and Jowo Akshobyavajra.

“Although you are physically distant from me, since we have an uncommon connection based on our karma and prayers, you can think of me, Gyalwa Rinpoche, the Dalai Lama.

“What is most important is that you should feel at ease and trust that the truth will eventually prevail.

“As for myself, I am now 87 years old and in good health. My doctors have assured me after examining me that I will live for another 15 to 20 years. So, you Tibetans in Tibet, please feel at ease and be happy.”



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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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@save-tibet.eu](mailto:info@save-tibet.eu)