



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### Global Losar celebrations support Tibetan cultural preservation

<https://savetibet.org/global-losar-celebrations-support-tibetan-cultural-preservation>

February 23, 2023

Parliamentarians and government leaders from several countries joined the Tibetan people to celebrate the Tibetan New Year this week, showing their support for preserving Tibetans' endangered culture, religion, language and identity.

“Losar,” the Tibetan New Year, fell this year on Feb. 21. It marked the arrival of the Year of the Water Hare 2150 in the Tibetan calendar.

“On this first day of the Year of the Water Hare, we celebrate the perseverance, compassion, and strength of Tibetans across the globe, including the over 26,000 members of the Tibetan diaspora in the United States,” [US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken said in a written message](#).

“Americans believe in the rights of all people, no matter who they are or where they are born, to speak their own language and practice their own faith,” [Blinken also said via a special video message](#) at a State Department Losar celebration on Feb. 22. “That’s why we remain firm in our resolve to defend and promote the human rights of Tibetans—including efforts to preserve and pass on the community’s distinct linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage.

“Tibetans must be able to [select their religious leaders free from interference](#); to live without fear of repression; and to practice the rich traditions—including this Losar holiday—that Tibetans have for centuries.”

| **Video:** [US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken's Losar Message](#)

#### United States

Blinken’s video message was part of the annual State Department Losar celebration on Feb. 22. The venue was decorated with prayer flags and a display of a traditional Losar altar set-up.

Under Secretary of State Uzra Zeya, who [serves as the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues](#), helped lead the celebration.

“[O]ur resolve to advance the human rights and dignity of all Tibetans, as well as preserve their distinct religious, cultural and linguistic identity, is unwavering,” Zeya said. “We also persist in our call for the [People’s Republic of China] to [resume meaningful and direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives](#) without preconditions.”

**Twitter:** [Under Secretary Uzra Zeya \(@UnderSecStateJ\)](#)

Honored to host @StateDept's annual Losar celebration w/ @SecBlinken @NMADmuseum. This Year of the Water 🐉, 🇺🇸 will continue to work w/ allies & partners to advance human rights & dignity of all Tibetans. Our resolve is unwavering. Losar Tashi Delek! 🌟🌞🌕  
<https://state.gov/under-secretary-zeyas-remarks-at-the-state-department-2023-losar-reception/>

Namgyal Choedup, representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration for North America, was invited by the State Department to address the gathering. He expressed appreciation on behalf of the Tibetan leadership for the United States' support to the Tibetan people, highlighting the personal commitment and initiatives from President Biden to Secretary Blinken and Special Coordinator Zeya. He particularly appreciated Zeya for her initiatives, including hosting a diplomatic roundtable for Sikyong Penpa Tsering.

The event also included performances of traditional Tibetan song and dance by the sister-brother duo of Tsekyi Dolkar Tsultrim and Tenzin Choeni from New York.

Zeya acknowledged the presence at the celebration of White House Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Senior Liaison Erika Moritsugu and former Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Maria Otero. Other attendees included State Department officials, including Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Rashad Hussain, Congressional staff, foreign diplomats and members of the Tibetan community.

**Twitter:** [Erika L. Moritsugu \(@emoritsugu46\)](#)

Losar Sang! Thank you @UnderSecStateJ Uzra Zeya and @SecBlinken and your excellent @StateDept team for hosting this auspicious event to honor our vibrant resilient Tibetan community

The State Department thanked the Office of Tibet in Washington, DC, the Capital Area Tibetan Association and the International Campaign for Tibet for their help in the organization of the celebration.

**Video:** [State Department Losar Celebration 2023](#)

Nicholas Burns, the US Ambassador to China, also recognized the day through [tweeting a Losar greeting in Tibetan](#).

**Twitter:** [Ambassador Nicholas Burns \(@USAmbChina\)](#)

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Governor Tim Walz of Minnesota proclaimed Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2023 as [Tibetan New Year - Losar Day in the state of Minnesota](#), recognizing the over 5,000 Tibetans living in Minnesota. A group of members of the Minnesota Tibetan American also visited the State Capitol to offer Losar greetings to their elected leaders.

## Around the world

In India, the exile home of the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration, [several officials shared messages of support on Losar](#), including the Chief Ministers of Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. Shashi Tharoor, a Member of Parliament from Kerala, also shared Losar wishes.

Several elected leaders shared Losar greetings in Canada, including Tibetan Canadian [Member of Provincial Parliament Bhutila Karpoche](#) and [Member of Parliament Arif Virani](#).

In Europe, [Navendu Mishra, a Member of the British Parliament](#), wished a Happy New Year to the Tibetan community.

**Twitter:** [Bhutila Karpoche \(@BhutilaKarpoche\)](#)

Losar Tashi Delek! Happy Tibetan New Year—Water Hare 2150.

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**Twitter:** [Arif Virani \(@viraniarif\)](#)

Losar Tashi Delek to the Tibetan community in Parkdale-High Park and abroad! May the new year bring prosperity, peace and success to everyone celebrating. Look for my new Losar greeting bus shelter advertisement on Queen and Jameson.

**Twitter:** [Navendu Mishra \(@NavPMishra\)](#)

To all those in the Tibetan community celebrating Losar, I wish you a very happy new year.

Tashi Delek!

In addition, in Spain, the [Inter-Parliamentary Group for Tibet officially launched on Losar](#) at the Spanish Senate with the support of about 30 Senators.

## Tibet

While the start of Losar was joyful for many in the Tibetan diaspora, it was a different story inside Tibet, where the Chinese government's fear of Tibetans' cultural resilience has led to severe repression.

According to [Radio Free Asia](#), China has ramped up its surveillance and police presence in Lhasa—the capital of Tibet and an important site of pilgrimage—because of the Losar holiday and the upcoming anniversaries of the March 10, 1959 Tibetan National Uprising and the March 2008 mass protests in Tibet.

A Tibetan from the region told RFA: “Police are stationed every kilometer where [members of] the public are summoned for random searches, especially of their cell phones.”

## Tibetan exile leaders

Despite the crackdown in Tibet, Tibetan leaders in exile showed during Losar their people's perseverance and success in building global support for their cause.

Noting that “we enter into the new year with a new hope,” [Penpa Tsering, the democratically elected Sikyong \(President\) of the Central Tibetan Administration](#), extended his Losar greetings to all the Tibetans inside Tibet and outside Tibet. He further highlighted the far-sighted vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for the survival of the Tibetan identity in exile.

“[W]e will be able to achieve what we intended to achieve with the cooperative effort of all the Tibetans, whether it's 7 million Tibetans inside Tibet or the 130,000 Tibetans in exile,” Penpa said.

“We have an added responsibility and so we should not forget that if we all contribute to the cause of Tibet, then we will definitely reach the objectives that we have set.”

**Instagram:** [Tibet.Net @tibetdotnet](#)

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Wishing you all a very Happy Losar: Water-Rabbit Year 2150. #Losar #TibetanNewYear  
#WaterRabbitYear



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