



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Dalai Lama turns 88, meets US leaders, talks China dialogue

<https://savetibet.org/dalai-lama-turns-88-meets-us-leaders-talks-china-dialogue>

July 10, 2023

The Dalai Lama met with top US officials in India this weekend while telling reporters that China wants to contact him to deal with the situation in Tibet.

“I am always open to talk,” the Tibetan spiritual leader said just days after his 88th birthday. “Now China also realizes the Tibetan people, their spirit is very strong. So in order to deal with the Tibetan problem, they want to contact me. I am also ready.”

China has [illegally occupied Tibet for over 60 years](#), forcing the Dalai Lama into exile in 1959.

Under China’s rule, [Tibet is now the least-free country on Earth](#) alongside South Sudan and Syria, according to Freedom House.

The Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace laureate, has led a decades-long effort to [resolve the conflict in Tibet through dialogue](#). His proposal, known as the [Middle Way Approach](#), would allow the Chinese government to keep Tibet in the People’s Republic of China but give Tibetans meaningful autonomy over their affairs.

“We are not seeking independence. We have decided since many years we will remain part of the People’s Republic of China,” the Dalai Lama said. “So we’ll see. Now China is changing. The Chinese, officially or unofficially, [want] contact with me.”

[Watch the Dalai Lama speak to reporters.](#)

Twitter: [RFATibetan \(@rfatibet\)](#)

འོ་གོང་ས་མཚོག་གིས་ “ད་ཆ་རྒྱ་ནག་ལ་འགྱུར་བ་འགྲོ་བཞིན་པ་དང་།

རྒྱ་ནག་གཞུང་གིས་གཞུང་འབྲེལ་དང་གཞུང་འབྲེལ་མ་ཡིན་པ་གཉི་གའི་ཚོག་ནས་ངོས་ལ་འབྲེལ་བ་བྱས་ཡོང་གི་འདུག” ཅེས་བཀའ་ལླུ་ལོང་དུ་བཤད།

His Holiness the Dalai Lama said “#China want to contact me in order to deal with Tibet problem.” #Dalailama

Meeting US leaders

After those remarks, the Dalai Lama met with a high-level US delegation in Delhi.

The delegation included Under Secretary of State Uzra Zeya, Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu, and USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator Änjali Kaur.

International Campaign for Tibet President Tencho Gyatso also took part in the meeting.

Twitter: [Tibet.net \(@NetTibet\)](https://twitter.com/NetTibet)

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama met with US high-level delegation led by Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Under Secretary Uzra Zeya in Delhi on 9 July 2023.

Zeya, who also serves as the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, previously [met with the Dalai Lama](#) in his exile home of Dharamsala, India last year.

Following this year's meeting in Delhi, the Chinese Embassy in India lashed out at the US. Wang Xiaojian, an embassy spokesperson, tweeted that Tibetan "affairs are purely internal affairs of China and no external forces have the right to interfere. China firmly opposes any form of contact between foreign officials and the 'Tibetan independence' forces."

Wang added: "The so-called 'Special Coordinator for Tibet[an] Issues' is pure offense and a move of political manipulation to interfere in China's internal affairs and undermine [Tibet's] development and stability. China has always been firmly opposed to this and has never recognized it."

Despite China's attempts to interfere in US policy on Tibet, the United States has offered decades of consistent, bipartisan support to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people.

Currently, the US House and Senate are considering the bipartisan Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Conflict Act, which will pressure the Chinese government to resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama's envoys to reach a negotiated agreement on Tibet's future.

[Learn more about the Resolve Tibet Act.](#)

US celebrates Dalai Lama's birthday

US leaders also helped celebrate the Dalai Lama's 88th birthday on July 6.

[Secretary of State Antony Blinken tweeted:](#) "Today, I extend my warmest wishes for good health and happiness to His Holiness @DalaiLama on the occasion of his 88th birthday. May his message of kindness and compassion be an inspiration for the world today and every day."

Twitter: [Secretary Antony Blinken \(@SecBlinken\)](https://twitter.com/SecBlinken)

Today, I extend my warmest wishes for good health and happiness to His Holiness @DalaiLama on the occasion of his 88th birthday. May his message of kindness and compassion be an inspiration for the world today and every day.

[Rashad Hussain, the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom](#), added: "Happy Birthday to His Holiness @DalaiLama, who offers us messages of peace and altruism and champions the right to freedom of religion or belief for all. I firmly support the ability of Tibetan Buddhists to freely choose and venerate their religious leaders without interference."

The [Chairs of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China](#) also wished the Dalai Lama a happy birthday, saying, “The world benefits greatly from his messages of compassion, non-violence and safeguarding the environment.” They added that China should free all Tibetans [imprisoned for celebrating His Holiness’ birthday](#).

[Rep. Jim McGovern](#), D-Mass., co-chair of the Commission and one of the main sponsors of the Resolve Tibet Act, spoke at a celebration in Hadley, Mass. According to his written remarks, McGovern said: “I hope [the Dalai Lama] will be with us for many more years. But I recognize that he won’t be with us forever. That is why it is so important that each of us continues to do our part to support and sustain efforts to resolve the conflict that still exists between Tibet and China.”

Zeya spoke at a celebration in Washington hosted by the Office of Tibet, the Capital Area Tibetan Association and the International Campaign for Tibet. “We believe that His Holiness plays an indispensable role as a spiritual compass to so many all around the world,” she said. She added: “In honor of His Holiness’ 88th birthday, the United States government reaffirms our support for the Tibetan community’s efforts to preserve their unique identity through language, through your religion and through your cultural traditions.”

[Watch the Dalai Lama’s birthday celebration in Washington.](#)

Facebook Livestream: [Watch the Dalai Lama’s 88th birthday celebration in Washington, DC!](#)

Other celebrations of the Dalai Lama’s birthday took place [across the United States](#).

Celebrations around the world

There were also celebrations across the globe, including [Australia](#), [Belgium](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Japan](#), [Mongolia and Russia](#), and the [United Kingdom](#).

The Dalai Lama himself cut his birthday cake at the [celebration in Dharamsala](#), which featured remarks by Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, as well as Vice-Chair of the Taiwanese Parliamentary Group for Tibet Hung Sun Han.

Twitter: [RFATibetan \(@rfatibet\)](#)

His Holiness the #DalaiLama cuts the Birthday cake at the Main Temple, #Dharamshala

Penpa Tsering, the Sikyong (President) of the Central Tibetan Administration, delivered a [statement on behalf of the Tibetan Kashag \(Cabinet\)](#), while Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel gave the [statement of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile](#).

Other Indian officials hailed the Dalai Lama on his birthday. Most notably, [Prime Minister Narendra Modi](#) said he personally spoke to the Dalai Lama and “conveyed heartfelt greetings to him on his 88th birthday. Wishing him a long and healthy life.”

Twitter: [Narendra Modi \(@narendramodi\)](#)

Spoke to His Holiness @DalaiLama and conveyed heartfelt greetings to him on his 88th birthday. Wishing him a long and healthy life.

Inside Tibet

Although China has arrested Tibetans for celebrating the Dalai Lama's birthday in the past, Tibetans inside Tibet still found subtle ways to praise their spiritual leader as he turned 88.

An image circulated in Tibet showing a graphic of the [Dalai Lama's holy hat, with the Tibetan numerals for 88 below it](#).

Twitter: [Tibet.net \(@NetTibet\)](#)

This graphic is made in Tibet to celebrate His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama's 88th birth anniversary. (Tibetan numeral ༄༄ [88 in english] and holy hat)

[Watch the Dalai Lama's message on his 88th birthday!](#)

Video: [His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 88th Birthday Message](#)



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