



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### Honoring 65 years of Tibetan resistance and resilience

<https://savetibet.org/honoring-65-years-of-tibetan-resistance-and-resilience>

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Sixty-five years ago, the people of Tibet rose up. Their courageous spirit continues to guide the Tibetan movement today.

Tibetan resistance to Chinese invasion in the late 1950s culminated on March 10, 1959, when thousands of Tibetans surrounded the Norbulingka Palace in Lhasa, Tibet's capital city, after they became concerned that the Chinese authorities' invitation to the Dalai Lama to watch a cultural performance could actually be a plan to abduct or disappear him. Subsequently, the Dalai Lama was able to escape into exile, keeping the Tibetan identity and the cause alive.

As the 65th anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising nears, the International Campaign for Tibet expresses our deep appreciation and admiration for the Tibetan people, who have shown inspiring resistance and resilience in the face of China's oppression.

ICT also expresses our enthusiasm over new efforts to bring China's occupation to a peaceful end. Just last month, the [Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act passed the US House](#) with broad, bipartisan support. Known as the Resolve Tibet Act, this innovative bill will increase US pressure on China to get back to the negotiating table with Tibetan leaders to resolve Tibet's status. We look forward to working with our allies in Congress and ICT members around the country to get the bill approved by the Senate and signed into law.

### Growing global support for Tibet

The Resolve Tibet Act is the latest in a wave of US support for the Tibetan people. In 2018, the US enacted the [Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act](#), which led the State Department to ban Chinese officials from entering the United States because of their role in keeping Americans out of Tibet. Two years later, the [Tibetan Policy and Support Act](#) became law, making it official US policy to sanction Chinese officials if they follow through on China's foolish threats to interfere in the succession of the Dalai Lama.

Tibet has also seen growing support from other countries. Earlier this year, an [unprecedented number of UN member states confronted the Chinese government](#) over its oppression in Tibet during China's Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. More than twice as many countries raised Tibet at the review compared to China's last UN review in 2018.

Other UN committees and experts have spoken up for Tibet recently, including by [calling for information about Tibetan political prisoners](#), [warning about possible forced labor in Tibet](#) and [demanding an end to China's forced assimilation of Tibetan children](#) at state-run boarding schools. Several countries, including [Germany](#), [Canada](#) and the [Czech Republic](#), joined in condemning the

boarding schools, while the [European Parliament](#) adopted a resolution urging China to abolish the schools immediately.

The 9th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups in February [brought together Tibet advocates from over 40 countries](#). Meanwhile, the government of India has provided an exile home for the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people for 65 years.

## **Tibetans' success in exile**

In Dharamsala, located in the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, and in all Tibetan settlements outside of Tibet, Tibetans have built an enviable democracy in exile. [Over 70% of eligible Tibetans—living in more than 25 countries—voted](#) in the most recent elections for the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and for the sikyong (president) of the Central Tibetan Administration. The Dalai Lama led Tibetans through the process of democratization, then stepped down from politics in 2011, turning authority over to CTA leaders.

The Dalai Lama remains the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism and one of the most admired figures in the entire world. His Holiness has received the Nobel Peace Prize and the US Congressional Gold Medal and many other honors. Through his books and public talks, he has attracted countless followers around the globe, introducing them to the richness and wisdom of Tibetan culture, and teaching them how to lead more compassionate lives.

Ordinary Tibetans have also made their mark in exile as politicians, artists, writers, scientists, medical professionals, journalists and more. Other Tibetans serve as elected parliamentarians, judges and more, while Tibetan exiles have produced acclaimed novels, films and works of art.

## **China's attempted erasure of Tibet**

Tibetans' prominence in exile is a stark contrast to China's attempted erasure of them inside Tibet. As ICT shows in a recent report, China largely [keeps Tibetans locked out of positions of power inside Tibet](#) and in China's national government. Under President-for-life Xi Jinping, China has embraced a policy of "Sinification," which seeks to force Tibetans—as well as Uyghurs, Mongols and other so-called "minority" groups—to assimilate as loyal citizens of China.

Perhaps the most egregious example is China's state-run boarding schools in Tibet, which have [forcibly separated over 1 million Tibetan children from their families](#), language, religion and culture. Horrific stories have emerged of students returning home on school breaks, and their [parents being unable to communicate with them](#).

The Chinese government is also now trying to [wipe the very name of Tibet off the map](#). Chinese state propaganda has been replacing the internationally recognized name "Tibet" with the Chinese-language translation "Xizang." This change is meant to support China's false claim that Tibet belongs to the Chinese, despite its long history as an independent country.

China has also clamped down on the borders, making it nearly impossible for Tibetans to escape. In 2022, just [five Tibetans successfully reached exile](#), down from over 750 in 2011. Trapped in this dire situation, [nearly 160 Tibetans have self-immolated over the past 15 years](#), lighting their own bodies on fire in a desperate attempt to demand change in their homeland.

It's no surprise that Freedom House, the watchdog group, recently [gave Tibet a global freedom score of 0 out of 100](#).

## Tibetan resistance

Even though it is officially atheist, China's Communist government is trying to control the Tibetan Buddhist reincarnation system. Next month will bring the 35th birthday of the Panchen Lama, one of the most important figures in Tibetan Buddhism. However, the Panchen Lama has not been seen in public since he was 6 years old, when the [Chinese government abducted him and his parents](#) just days after the Dalai Lama recognized him as the reincarnation of the previous Panchen Lama. In his place, China appointed its own Panchen Lama, who now serves as a mouthpiece for Beijing.

China has made clear it will interfere in the succession process of the Dalai Lama too by illegally claiming authority to select the 15th Dalai Lama. But as the [Dalai Lama himself has said](#), "nobody will trust, nobody will respect" a Dalai Lama picked by the Chinese government.

China's bullying will also fail to stop Tibetans' resistance. Just recently, despite China's brutal punishment for Tibetan dissenters, [thousands of Tibetans protested en masse against a hydropower dam in Derge county](#) in eastern Tibet that would reportedly force two villages to relocate and submerge six Tibetan Buddhist monasteries containing centuries-old murals.

## Resolving Tibet

Tibetans have remained overwhelmingly nonviolent for the last 65 years, thanks in large part to the leadership of the Dalai Lama. China should take advantage of the opportunity it has now to work with this Dalai Lama to bring the crisis in Tibet to a peaceful end.

ICT renews our call for the Chinese government to get back to the negotiating table with Tibetan leaders. The Dalai Lama has laid out a "Middle Way Approach" that can solve this conflict by leaving Tibet as part of the People's Republic of China in exchange for giving Tibetans meaningful autonomy in their homeland. His Holiness' envoys met for 10 rounds of dialogue with Chinese officials from 2002-10, but since then, China has refused to negotiate in good faith. There is no reason why the dialogue cannot resume now.

After 65 years, it's time to resolve Tibet.



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