



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Events showcase 65 years of Tibetan resistance and resilience

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The Tibetan cause was supposed to disappear 65 years ago. But you wouldn't know it seeing the vivid support for Tibet in Washington, DC and cities around the globe last week.

To mark the 65th anniversary of the historic Tibetan National Uprising of March 10, 1959 in Tibet's capital Lhasa, Tibetan Americans and Tibet supporters rallied outside China's embassy in the US capital, then marched through the streets chanting "China out of Tibet now!" and "Long live the Dalai Lama!" on their way to the White House.

The next day, March 11, many of those same advocates took part in a record-setting Tibet Lobby Day on Capitol Hill, meeting with members of the House and Senate to urge their support for US legislation on Tibet.

That very day, a new bipartisan piece of legislation condemning China's mass arrest of peaceful Tibetan protestors and reaffirming the House's support for the Tibetan people's right to self-determination was introduced by two members of the House.

That evening, several members of Congress and other US and Tibetan leaders attended a special event at the Capitol recognizing 65 years of resistance and resilience by the Tibetan people.

The next day, March 12, advocates concluded Tibet Lobby Day events with several more meetings with senators and representatives, bringing the total number of meetings to nearly 100 and adding an exclamation point to a remarkable three days of Tibet support on Capitol Hill.

"These past few days in Washington have sent strong messages," said Tencho Gyatso, president of the International Campaign for Tibet, which helped organize the week's events alongside other Tibet groups. "For the US government, the message was that Tibetan Americans appreciate their support and want them to pass new legislation to help peacefully resolve China's oppression in Tibet. For the Tibetan people, the message was that Congress will continue to support their just cause."

"For China, the message was loud and clear: Congress wants the Chinese government to get back to the negotiating table with Tibetan leaders, and even after 65 years, the Tibetan people will never let go of their resistance and resilience until China's occupation of Tibet comes to an end."

65th anniversary

March 10 marked [65 years since the Tibetan National Uprising](#), when thousands of Tibetans surrounded the Dalai Lama's residence in Tibet's capital of Lhasa, forming a human shield to protect their leader from the imminent threat of abduction by China's occupying forces.

Thanks to the courage of those ordinary Tibetans, the Dalai Lama was able to escape into freedom and exile, keeping the Tibetan cause alive.

Over the past 65 years, China has turned Tibet into a prison, with the watchdog group Freedom House recently giving Tibet a [global freedom score of 0 out of 100](#).

Despite China's oppression, the Tibetan people have never lost hope and have continued to show defiance and resistance both inside Tibet and in exile.

On this year's March 10, dozens of Tibetan Americans and other Tibet supporters protested in Washington, DC. They waved Tibetan flags, shouted slogans through bullhorns and received messages of support from people they encountered as they marched from the Chinese embassy to the White House.

[Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.](#), a longtime friend of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people, expressed her encouragement for Tibetans on X (formerly known as Twitter).

"65 years ago, thousands of Tibetans risked their lives for religious, linguistic and cultural freedoms," Pelosi said. "A young Dalai Lama was forced to leave his country and has been a symbol of the courage and resilience of the people of Tibet. Today, we continue our commitment to support their fight for Tibet's cultural freedoms and autonomy." Pelosi ended with a traditional Tibetan greeting: "Tashi delek."

March 10 around the world

Elected leaders from other countries also showed their support for the Tibetan people on March 10.

[Bhutila Karpoche, a member of Provincial Parliament in Canada](#) and the first Tibetan exile elected to public office in North America, delivered remarks saying: "Tibetans inside Tibet have shown extraordinary courage. Language, culture, history and identity is under threat in Tibet, but resistance is as strong as ever."

A [delegation of German and Australian parliamentarians](#) attended the official commemoration of Tibetan Uprising Day in Dharamsala, India, the exile home of the Dalai Lama.

"The civilized world is standing with Tibet and its ancient and unique civilization and culture," German Bundestag member Michael Brand said at a press conference.

Australian Senator Dean Smith, co-chair of the Australian All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet, added, "we believe very, very strongly that when the Tibetan community is strong in countries like Australia and India, it makes the cause of democracy and human rights much easier and attainable in Tibet."

Tibetan leaders

The [Central Tibetan Administration](#), which provides democratic governance for Tibetans in exile, led the March 10 commemoration event in Dharamsala.

The [Kashag \(cabinet\)](#) issued a statement noting that March 10 marked not just the 65th anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising but also the 35th anniversary of China imposing martial law in Lhasa in 1989 and the 16th anniversary of pan-Tibetan protests that swept across the Tibetan Plateau in 2008.

“On this solemn occasion, we remember and offer our prayers in honour of our compatriots who have given their lives for the cause of Tibet,” the Kashag statement said. “We stand in solidarity with those who are still suffering under the brutal occupation of the People’s Republic of China.”

The [Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile](#) added in a statement: “Over the last more than 60 years of our living in exile, host India and its people, the United States of America, and Europe, as well as governments and peoples in other parts of the world, besides various groups and organizations as well as private individuals, have extended support and provided help and relief for Tibet and the Tibetan people. To all of them, I take the opportunity provided by this solemn occasion to express our heartfelt gratitude.”

Tibet Lobby Day

The energy of the March 10 activism fed into an unprecedented Tibet Lobby Day in Washington.

The annual event, organized by the International Campaign for Tibet, brought a record number of over 200 Tibetan Americans and Tibet supporters to Capitol Hill for meetings with senators, representatives and Congressional staff.

The Lobby Day participants met with Sens. Todd Young, R-Ind., Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., Mike Braun, R-Ind., and Jack Reed, D-R.I.; Speaker Emerita Pelosi; Reps. McGovern, Don Beyer, D-Va., Joe Courtney, D-Conn., Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Ill., and Grace Meng, D-N.Y.; and nearly 100 Congressional offices in total.

During their discussions, the Lobby Day participants asked the Congressional leaders to support and pass the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, which just [passed the House last month](#), in the Senate and get it signed into law. Known as the Resolve Tibet Act, this bipartisan bill will pressure the Chinese government to renew dialogue with Tibetan leaders to reach a negotiated agreement on Tibet’s status.

Facebook: [International Campaign for Tibet](#)

Tibet Lobby Day 2024 is done! Over 200 Tibetan Americans and Tibet allies from over 20 states made their way to Washington, DC to advocate for US legislation on Tibet!

The event was a resounding success, and ICT sends a big thank you to each and every advocate for their time on Capitol Hill!

#tibet #savetibet #dalailama #humanrights #protests #leadership #government #resolution

Resolution introduced

The Lobby Day participants also asked Congress members to support the Tibetans protesting in eastern Tibet. According to reports, [China’s police arrested over 1,000 Tibetans](#) in Derge (Chinese: Dege) county after large-scale protests broke out last month against a hydropower dam project that

would reportedly force residents of two villages to abandon their homes and lead to the destruction of six Buddhist monasteries containing murals that are centuries old.

As the Lobby Day proceeded, two members of the House—McGovern and Rep. Young Kim, R-Calif.—heeded the call by [introducing a resolution](#) on March 11 titled, “Recognizing the 65th anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising Day of March 10, 1959, and condemning human rights violations related to the hydropower dam construction project in Derge.”

The bipartisan resolution condemns China’s “arbitrary detention” of the protestors and expresses “grave concern” for their well-being. It demands China immediately release the protestors and all prisoners of conscience.

The resolution also demands that China “publicly apologize” for violating the protestors’ rights and calls on the Biden administration to urge Chinese authorities to halt the dam project unless China takes local Tibetans’ views into account and obtains their genuine consent.

In addition, the resolution recognizes the 65th anniversary of the Dalai Lama’s escape into exile and confirms the House’s “longstanding support for the human rights, including the right of self-determination, of the Tibetan people.”

Twitter: [Rep. Jim McGovern \(@RepMcGovern\)](#)

We will not let the People’s Republic of China erase Tibetan culture, language, history, and religion. Proud to stand in solidarity with activists from across the country in their fight for the human rights of the Tibetan people!

Twitter: [Young Kim \(@RepYoungKim\)](#)

The Tibetan people have suffered the Chinese Communist Party’s oppression & control for 70 years, & the CCP shows no signs of slowing down until it has erased Tibetan culture.

I’m proud to lead the bipartisan charge with @RepMcGovern to stand with Tibet.

Tibet Alive

While Tibet Lobby Day succeeded in pushing US support for Tibet forward, a special event on the evening of March 11 gave Tibetan Americans and Tibet supporters the chance to look back on the Tibetan people’s last 65 years.

“Tibet Alive: 65 Years of Resistance and Resilience” chronicled the past six-and-a-half decades of Tibetan history inside Tibet and in exile. The event, organized by the Office of Tibet and the International Campaign for Tibet, featured tributes to different eras.

Tenzin Namgyal Tethong, former chairman of the Tibetan Kashag (cabinet), former representative of the Office of Tibet in New York and the founding president of ICT, spoke about the events leading up to and following the 1959 Tibetan Uprising. Afterward, John Ackerly, another former ICT president and current board member, addressed empowering the Tibetan diaspora through democracy and international support between 1960 and 1989.

Next, Elsie Walker, a cousin of President George H.W. Bush and a longtime friend of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people, talked about increasing global support and reconnection with Tibet in the 1990s. ICT's Head of Research and Monitoring Bhuchung K. Tsering then spoke about the institutionalization of Tibet support in the US, tragedy in Tibet and dialogue between Tibetans and Chinese in the 21st century.

Finally, Tenzin Kunsal Womatsang, a Tibetan American youth from Virginia, read the poem "Do You Know The Tales Of Our Forefathers?" by the detained Tibetan writer Dhi Lhaden.

"Tibet Alive" also featured remarks by Namgyal Choedup, representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration to North America; former Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, who helped introduced the bill that gave the Dalai Lama the Congressional Gold Medal in 2007; and Piero Tozzi, staff director of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. A representative of Students for a Free Tibet read a statement from Sen. Todd Young, one of the main sponsors of the Resolve Tibet Act.

"When so many people come together with a positive attitude, wanting to do something, then extraordinary things can be done," ICT President Tencho Gyatso said. "I think today was quite extraordinary."

| Video: [Tibet Alive: 65 Years of Resistance and Resilience](#)

Visit from lawmakers

"Tibet Alive" took place in an auditorium of the Capitol Visitor Center.

Before the event began, several members of Congress joined the Tibet advocates for discussion and remarks in the atrium.

Pelosi greeted the crowd: "It's wonderful to be here with all of you as we observe 'Tibet Alive: 65 Years of Resistance and Resilience.'" The Speaker Emerita added, "Because of all of you, and your values, and your determination, and your resistance and resilience, we have a good record of progress in that 65 years."

Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn., addressed China's efforts to eliminate the Tibetan language, especially through state-run boarding schools that have [separated over 1 million Tibetan children from their language, families, religion and culture](#).

"When you remove language, you remove culture. I know that firsthand from talking to the Native Americans here in the United States who had their language silenced at one time by the United States government," McCollum said. "So I say to the Chinese government: Learn from our mistake. Celebrate the culture. Celebrate the language. And let Tibet be free."

Rep. Mario Díaz-Balart, R-Fla., said, "We must always speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves." He added: "Never give up ... because we are on the right side of history."

McGovern told the Tibet advocates: "This group gets bigger and bigger and bigger every year."

“You’re an inspiration to me and to so many of our colleagues because what the Tibetan culture stands for, what the Tibetan religion stands for, is love and peace and everything that’s good, and we need you now more than ever.”



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