



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

ICT statement on the Panchen Lama's 36th birthday

<https://savetibet.org/ict-statement-on-the-panchen-lamas-36th-birthday>

April 23, 2025

April 25, 2025 marks the 36th birthday of the Panchen Lama, who has remained under continued detention by Chinese authorities since 1995, only for being recognized by the Dalai Lama as a prominent Tibetan Buddhist master. His situation concretely symbolizes China's abuse of Tibetan religious freedom and tradition.

Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama, was born in Chinese-occupied Tibet on April 25, 1989.

On May 17, 1995, three days after he was recognized by the Dalai Lama, at age 6, Chinese authorities kidnapped him and his parents. The Panchen Lama has not been seen since, a clear violation of China's own constitution. Article 37 of the Chinese Constitution says, "Unlawful detention, or the unlawful deprivation or restriction of a citizen's personal freedom by other means, is prohibited." The International Campaign for Tibet reiterates its demands that China allow the Panchen Lama, who is an adult, to exercise this right and release him so that he can take his rightful place at the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, the traditional home of the Panchen Lama.

ICT also calls on the governments and the international community, to press China to account for the Panchen Lama's whereabouts and well-being. In particular, we urge Secretary of State Marco Rubio to act on his statement of March 3, 2025, to protect "the universal, fundamental, and inalienable human rights of Tibetans and promoting their distinct cultural, linguistic, and religious heritage." We urge Secretary Rubio to directly raise the issue of the Panchen Lama with the Chinese Government.

After kidnapping the Panchen Lama, the atheist Chinese Communist Party selected another boy, Gyaltsen Norbu, as Panchen Lama. Today, Norbu is being made to serve Beijing as a mouthpiece and political agent.

The continued disappearance of the Panchen Lama is emblematic of China's repressive control of Tibet, which has led to executions, torture, imprisonment, the destruction of religious institutions, political indoctrination, the expulsion of monks and nuns from monasteries and nunneries, the banning of religious ceremonies, restrictions on the numbers of monks in monasteries and the extreme disruption of the religious practices of average Tibetans.

China's attitude toward the detained Panchen Lama clearly shows that its claim of respecting religious freedom in Tibet—a historically independent country that China has occupied and ruled with an iron fist for the past 60 years—is aimed solely at serving its political goal of controlling Tibetan Buddhism.

The Chinese authorities have realized that Tibetan Buddhism is the core of Tibetan identity, and the attempt is to alter this identity to comply with their CCP goals. Thus, Sinification serves to make

Tibetan Buddhism conform to the CCP ideology and be an active agent of its promotion and implementation.

If the Chinese authorities really believe that everything is fine in Tibet today and the Tibetan people are happy living under Chinese rule, they should have the courage to free the Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and let him return to his people.



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

ICT Europe
Funenpark 1D | 1018 AK
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266
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

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@savetibet.eu