



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

CTA preliminary election results demonstrate Tibetan commitment to democracy

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The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) congratulates the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and its Central Election Commission (CEC) on successful completion of the first stage of its global elections on February 1, 2026, in a democratic, free and fair process.

In the preliminary election, utilizing one of the world's most innovative decentralized voting systems, 51,140 Tibetans outside of Tibet exercised their fundamental right to determine their own future. Through this year's election, the Tibetan people are peacefully and transparently choosing the 45 members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPiE) and the political head of the CTA, known as the Sikyong.

According to Tibetan elections regulations, Sikyong candidates who receive 60 percent or more of the vote in the preliminary round are elected outright and do not need to compete in the final round. The incumbent Sikyong, Penpa Tsering, has been declared elected as he received 31,208 votes, over 61 percent of votes cast. ICT congratulates him on his re-election and looks forward to continuing to work with him and his Administration over the next five years.

“Under difficult circumstances, the CTA and the Tibetan people have once again held free, fair and democratic elections to choose their political leaders. Tibet belongs to the Tibetan people, and they alone should determine its future,” said ICT President Tencho Gyatso. “We encourage the United States, countries in Europe and likeminded partners to continue to advocate for dialogue and for the preservation of Tibet's unique linguistic, cultural and religious heritage.”

The final round of voting for parliamentary seats is scheduled for Sunday April 26. Elected CTA leaders including the Sikyong and the Members of the TPiE will serve five-year terms. The Tibetan Parliament system was introduced by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1960. The Sikyong, then known as Kalon Tripa (Chairman of the Cabinet), was appointed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama until 2001, and the position has been directly elected by the Tibetan diaspora thereafter.

Tibetan elections 2026 overview

The global Tibetan diaspora, encompassing Tibetans in nearly 30 countries, participated in elections on February 1 and will do so in April 2026 to elect the leaders of the Central Tibetan Administration, which is recognized by Tibetans around the world as their legitimate government.

The CTA in Dharamsala, India, is composed of three pillars: the judiciary as represented by the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission; the legislature as represented by the TPiE; and the executive as represented by the Sikyong and his cabinet. While the three Justice Commissioners are elected by the TPiE, the Sikyong and the 45 Members of the TPiE are freely, democratically and directly elected by Tibetans around the world outside of Tibet. Political authority has rested solely with the elected CTA leadership since 2011.

Because the Sikyong was elected outright in the February preliminary election, the April general elections, scheduled for April 26, will elect the Members of the 18th TPiE. The tenure of the current TPiE has been shortened to enable Sikyong and TPiE elections to be held concurrently.

The independent Central Election Commission conducts the elections, including deciding and publishing the schedule and guidelines.

Parliamentary (TPiE) seat allocation

For seats in the TPiE, Tibetan voters outside of Tibet exercise a mixed system of one-person, one-vote as well as plural voting. Tibetans living in the Indian subcontinent (India, Nepal) may vote for 10 members (out of which at least two should be women) based on their traditional provincial origin, whether from Utsang, Kham or Amdo. Tibetans living outside of South Asia do not vote for provincial seats; those living in Europe can vote for two TPiE seats, as can Tibetans living in the Americas. Tibetans in Australasia and other Asian countries outside of the Indian subcontinent elect one Member of the TPiE.

Tibetans who belong to the clergy get two additional votes to choose from their respective religious lineages, whether Sakya, Kagyu, Gelug, Nyingma or Bon. The TPiE includes 10 seats for religious representatives.

All Tibetans in exile have the same one vote to choose the Sikyong.

Voting population

All Tibetans aged 18 years or older may vote. Candidates for the TPiE must be 25 years old and candidates for Sikyong must be 35 years old. A candidate must possess a valid Green Book, the popular name for the booklet that records one's voluntary contribution to the CTA and that has come to be recognized as a definitive marker of Tibetan identity. 91,042 voters have registered for the 2026 election cycle – 56,749 from the Indian subcontinent, and 34,293 from rest of the world.

Announcement of the 2026 results

The general elections will take place on April 26. Vote counting will begin on April 28 by the respective local election commissions and local announcement made after completion. Final results will be announced by the CEC on May 13.

Official Slogan: The CEC announced that the official slogan for the 2026 elections will be 'I AM TIBET, I VOTE FOR TIBET,' which the CEC said is "signifying unity and strength of the Tibetan people."



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