



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Free, fair and transparent Tibetan parliamentary election spotlights success of Tibetan democracy

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The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) congratulates Tibetans in exile on the successful completion of their democratic elections on April 26. Using an innovative and transparent system for decentralized voting, the Tibetan Central Election Commission ensured tens of thousands of Tibetans in dozens of countries around the globe could exercise their fundamental right to vote for their representatives in the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPIE).

An international experts' election observation mission monitored the proceedings in the Tibetan communities in northern and southern India before and during the April 26 vote. While the formal report of that mission coordinated by ICT will be announced in several weeks, initial reports indicate that the voting was transparent and fair, despite persistent efforts by the Chinese Communist Party to spread disinformation on and offline. The TPIE general election follows the preliminary election in February, when the Tibetan diaspora nominated candidates for the TPIE to advance to the general election. Additionally, in February, Sikyong (CTA President) Penpa Tsering was [elected outright](#) because Tibetan voters cast more than the needed 60 percent of their Sikyong votes for him.

“The April 26 vote continues the successful and transparent election process from February and yet again demonstrates the resilience of Tibetan democracy. Tibet belongs to the Tibetan people, and they alone will determine its future,” said ICT President Tencho Gyatso. “I was honored to be able to observe the voting first-hand. We continue to encourage the United States and likeminded partners to continue to advocate for dialogue and for the preservation of Tibet’s unique cultural, linguistic and religious heritage.”

Initially introduced by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1960, CTA elections are now held in over 30 countries, enabling over 90,000 registered members of the Tibetan diaspora to democratically elect their political leaders.

Local election commissions, operating under the rules of the CEC, began counting votes on April 28 and will announce tallies when they are completed. Final results will be announced by the CEC on May 13, and elected CTA leaders including Sikyong Penpa Tsering and Members of the TPIE will be sworn in on May 27 for five-year terms.

Tibetan elections 2026 explained in-depth

The global Tibetan diaspora, encompassing Tibetans in over 30 countries, participated in elections in February and April of 2026 to elect the leaders of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), which is recognized by Tibetans around the world as their legitimate government. Tibetans were choosing the political head of the CTA, known as the Sikyong, and 45 members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPIE).

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 directly elected by Tibetans around the world outside of Tibet. Political authority has rested solely with the elected CTA leadership since 2011.

The autonomous CEC conducts the elections, including deciding and publishing the schedule and guidelines.

Election schedule

The 2026 CTA election is a two-stage process –preliminary elections to nominate candidates and general elections to decide the winners. Preliminary elections were held on February 1 and the general elections on April 26. The tenure of the current TPIE has been shortened to enable Sikyong and TPIE elections to be held concurrently.

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, Bhutan) get to vote for 10 members (out of which at least two should be women) based on their traditional provincial origin, whether from U-Tsang, Kham or Amdo. However, on April 23, the CEC announced that the voting rights for a section of Tibetans living in Nepal were being taken away for the April 26 elections after reported irregularities in the preliminary elections there on Feb 1.

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 thus 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.



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