



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Dalai Lama reaffirms commitment to serve humanity for decades to come amid worldwide 91st birthday celebrations and tributes from global leaders

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Tibetans and supporters around the world marked the 91st birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama on July 6 [with celebrations spanning India](#), North America, Europe and beyond, as global leaders honored the Tibetan spiritual leader, whose lifelong message of compassion, nonviolence and universal responsibility continues to inspire people around the world.

At the [main birthday celebrations, which took place in Leh, Ladakh](#) in India, His Holiness reaffirmed his aspiration to continue serving humanity for decades to come, as he presided over a large public gathering of around 25,000 devotees, as well as senior Buddhist leaders, representatives of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, Indian dignitaries, and members of the local community.

Cultural performances by Tibetan and Ladakhi artists, prayers for His Holiness' long life, and traditional ceremonies marked the occasion, while messages of congratulations poured in from around the world, including from the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Riley Barnes, members of the US Congress, and other prominent global leaders.

Addressing those gathered at the birthday celebrations in Leh, Ladakh, the Dalai Lama reflected on the guiding principle of his life. He said, "I've reached the age of 91. When I look back on my life, this altruistic thought to help others has been at the core of my practice. This is what I think about the moment I wake up every day."

The Dalai Lama also reiterated that he would live for several decades more to continue to serve humanity. "I'm 91, but according to indications in my dreams it seems I may yet live to be 130. So, I hope to be able to help Chinese people through the teaching of the Buddha and also to help people around the world to lead good, positive lives. This is what I aspire to do," he said.

'Year of Compassion' honoring the Dalai Lama

The birthday celebrations came during the Central Tibetan Administration's (CTA) 'Year of Compassion', an initiative that was launched as an expression of gratitude to the Dalai Lama and promote global awareness of his four principal commitments: to promote universal human values; promote harmony among religious traditions; preserve and promote Tibetan religion and culture, and; review the ancient Indian knowledge systems and traditions and their integration with modern education.

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) also joined celebrations around the world commemorating His Holiness' birthday and recognizing his decades-long commitment to peace, compassion, dialogue and the Tibetan people's nonviolent struggle.

In the vision of CTA's Year of Compassion initiative, which was observed from July 6, 2025 to July 6 2026, [ICT had launched its Compassion Rising World Tour](#) global campaign in April 2025 to honor the Dalai Lama's life and efforts and inspire acts of compassion. The campaign also spotlighted Tibet's enduring struggle for freedom and seeks to [unite global communities around the Dalai Lama's message](#) of peace and resilience.

Speaking during the Ladakh celebration, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the democratically elected leader of the Tibetan government in exile, reflected on the significance and impact of the CTA's Year of Compassion initiative in promoting the Dalai Lama's four principal commitments.

He highlighted the global commemorations held in honor of the Dalai Lama and expressed gratitude to Tibetans, supporters, and friends of Tibet for their continued solidarity and support. He also noted that several cities around the world, particularly in the United States, have proclaimed the Dalai Lama's birthday as a Day of Compassion, reflecting the universal and enduring appeal of his message of compassion, non-violence, interfaith harmony, and human values.

"In a world confronted by division, violence, and suffering, the timeless message of compassion championed by His Holiness is more relevant and necessary than ever before. Therefore, the Year of Compassion should not be regarded merely as a one-year campaign that concludes after twelve months. Rather, it should serve as the beginning of a lifelong commitment to fostering compassion, kindness, and ethical conduct," Sikyong Tsering said.

Calls for repeal of 'Ethnic Unity and Progress Law'

In its [statement marking the Dalai Lama's birthday, the Kashag \(or Cabinet\)](#) of the Central Tibetan Administration [also condemned China's new Ethnic Unity and Progress Law](#), which was forcibly enacted on July 1, and said the death of [Lobsang Palden, widely known as Lobga Rangzen, who self-immolated](#) outside the United Nations headquarters in New York on July 2 "...was intended to draw international attention" to the law and "...to appeal for greater international engagement regarding the situation in Tibet."

"In response to the Chinese government's Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress law, the Kashag has already begun formulating a comprehensive strategy to address its implications. As these plans are finalized, specific measures will be implemented in a phased and systematic manner," the Kashag said in its statement.

It urged the Chinese government to reconsider the law, suspend its implementation, and implement policies that respect and protect the unique languages, cultures, religions, histories, and identities of diverse nationalities.

Dolma Tsering Teykhang, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPiE), read out a [statement on behalf of the TPiE](#) commemorating the 91st birthday of the Dalai Lama, expressing deep reverence for His Holiness's lifelong dedication to compassion, secular ethics, peace, non-violence, and the advancement of human values. She further noted that His Holiness's pivotal role in ensuring the preservation of the Tibetan religion, culture, language, and identity while inspiring support and respect for the Tibetan people's aspirations internationally.

"His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave a profound speech at the beginning of this year, saying we should be cognizant of the fact that the Tibetan language is the essence of Tibetan culture and we should pay special attention to it. All the Tibetan people residing in free countries therefore have a responsibility to make every effort to use our own language and script so as to be able to maintain and preserve the Tibetan culture that the younger generations should be able to inherit without any sort of decline in them," Teykhang said, [on behalf of the TPiE](#).

Tributes in honor of Lobga Rangzen

In its statement, the Tibetan Parliament also paid tribute to Lobga Rangzen and the many other Tibetans who have tragically self-immolated as a form of protest against China's repressive policies and illegal occupation of Tibet. "Since the year 2009, well over a 150 Tibetan people in Tibet and in exile have carried out self-immolations in an unending series of protests. In the history of the world, this remains the longest campaign with the highest number of non-violent acts of self-immolations," the Tibetan parliament in exile said in its statement.

It urged governments and parliaments across the world and the United Nations to review the Ethnic Unity and Progress Law with urgency and ensure that all available measures be employed to prevent the crime of ethnic genocide being committed in Tibet.

On July 6, ICT also participated in a public memorial service held in New York to honor Lobga Rangzen, and expressed solidarity with Tibetans and supporters from across the United States who were gathered at the memorial to pay their respects and honor his tireless commitment to the Tibetan freedom movement.

During the memorial, organized by the Tibetan Community of New York and New Jersey, ICT President Tencho Gyatso urged Tibetans to remain united in advancing the cause of the Tibetan nation, echoing Lobga Rangzen's appeal for unity and collective action in his final public message before his passing.

Highlighting His Holiness the Dalai Lama's longstanding guidance that Tibetans in exile serve as the voice of Tibetans inside Tibet, Gyatso urged the community to leverage each other's unique strengths to contribute in different and unique ways to the Tibetan movement, emphasizing that through united action, success is certain.

Dr. Namgyal Choedup, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in North America, told attendees that His Holiness had offered prayers for Lobga Rangzen immediately upon learning of his self-immolation.

Choedup also thanked Tibetan associations across North America for rallying together in a united effort to honor Lobga's sacrifice and called for that spirit of unity and cooperation to continue in support of the Tibetan cause.

The memorial was also attended by North America Members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Kalsang Phuntsok Godruk and Tseten Phuntsok and former Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for Latin America Jigme Tsering, along with Tibetan activists, former members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, and community leaders and members from across the United States.

Jigme Ugen, President of the Tibetan National Congress, also addressed the gathering on behalf of Lobga Rangzen's family and [read out the statement issued by Sikyong Penpa Tsering](#) at the request of Lobga's family.

The memorial in New York formed part of a broader wave of commemorations held worldwide. Tibetans gathered outside United Nations headquarters in New York and outside Chinese embassies and consulates in multiple countries, including in the United States and United Kingdom, to call attention to the human rights situation in Tibet while honoring Lobga Rangzen's memory. Memorial services, prayer gatherings and peaceful demonstrations were also organized by Tibetan communities around the world.

On July 3, the International Campaign for Tibet joined a coalition of over [160 Tibet groups and supporters worldwide](#) in expressing solidarity with Lobga Rangzen's family and all Tibetans who continue to endure the consequences of the ongoing Chinese occupation of Tibet and in urging global governments, the United Nations, and democratic institutions worldwide to:

- Urgently and publicly raise concerns regarding the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet.
- Press for immediate, independent, and unrestricted access to Tibet for UN experts, journalists, and international observers.
- Call for the release of Tibetan political prisoners and greater transparency regarding their treatment and wellbeing of those arbitrarily detained or disappeared.
- Support efforts to preserve Tibet's unique language, religion, culture, and heritage.
- Echo the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' call to immediately repeal China's new "Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress," which further institutionalizes discriminatory and assimilationist policies against Tibetans.



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