


FREE TIBET

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Tibetan earthquake: what now?

 freeTIBET

• Tibetans marginalised • The UK, China and you • Religious freedoms violated •



Free Tibet Director Stephanie Brigden

Dear friends

Like you, my thoughts and prayers have been with everyone affected by the terrible earthquake in Tibet. Having lived and worked in Jyekundo, I had to wait to hear if my friends were safe. During those agonising days, I got a small taste of how it must feel for Tibetans forced into exile who cannot freely pick up the telephone to know if their loved ones are safe. After a few terrible days I heard through a third party that my friends were alive, although they had lost their homes.

Over a month since the earthquake, the emphasis has now moved from saving lives to reconstruction. Vast sums of money have been publicly pledged and widely reported in the Chinese and international media – how it will be spent remains to be seen.

The Chinese regime has continually lauded the sums of money that have been invested in Tibet and the progress made. Today visitors at the Shanghai Expo can even visit a pavilion named ‘Heavenly Tibet’, but the doubling of the economy in the Tibetan Autonomous Region has not led to improvements in health or education for Tibetans. Subsidies have benefited Chinese

state-owned companies and allowed the Chinese state to plunder Tibet.

As the monies flood into Jyekundo, it’s crucial that we report on who benefits. It is vital that Tibetans have equal access to any opportunities these funds create, including employment. New infrastructure, including homes, schools and hospitals, must reflect the Tibetan identity of the area.

Inevitably the news of the earthquake, like other major events in Tibet, stretched our small team. To ensure we can continue to respond quickly and accurately we will be increasing our staffing capacity, thanks directly to the cash injection generated by our Life Membership base.

Many great hotels across the UK and Europe have donated fantastic prizes for our raffle. At £1 per ticket, at odds far better than the National Lottery, it’s certainly worth a try!

Thank you to all of you who have given your support.

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Earthquake in Tibet

Over 85% of buildings in Jyekundo were destroyed and most of the victims were Tibetan



As the earthquake took place in Tibet, the Chinese regime was immediately concerned with ensuring the media were 'on their message' and to manage the risk of negative examples of the impact of Chinese occupation leaking out. Both Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and President Hu Jintao visited the area, but a request from the people of Jyekundo and from the Dalai Lama himself for him to visit the area was ignored. Local Tibetans complained that the efforts of the Chinese rescuers were being emphasised at the expense of the role of Tibetan monks and that Chinese state-controlled media cameras would stop and start rolling dependent upon the scene. Allegations were made of efforts to control online communications, with Chinese search engine Baidu blocking searches with words linked to the earthquake in the hours immediately following the quake. Through secure channels of communication some local Tibetan nomads explained that the authorities had forcibly resettled them into fixed dwellings and they had lost family members when their homes collapsed, whereas they would have been safe in their traditional nomadic tents.

A powerful earthquake struck the Tibetan area of Jyekundo (Chinese: Yushu) in Kham on the morning of Wednesday 14 April, shortly before 8 am local time (midnight in the UK). In a few life-changing minutes more than two thousand people were killed. Many were trapped under rubble as their homes, shops and classrooms collapsed around them. Many thousands more were left injured and homeless.

In the ensuing chaos mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, monks and nuns used their bare hands to claw through the rubble, desperately trying to find family members, teachers, students and friends.

In Jyekundo, as in towns across the Tibetan plateau following the Spring 2008 protests, the Chinese government has increased its military presence in order to control and intimidate the local population. Faced with people who desperately needed their help, but who they were there to control, the military were unsure how to respond. It was reported locally that it was many hours before the military deployed to help in the search and rescue.

In Ziling (Chinese: Xining), the capital of the province, a prominent Tibetan writer and intellectual Tagyal, better known by his pen-name Shogdung and previously regarded as being close to China's Communist Party, was arrested for signing an open letter about the earthquake. Tagyal, with others, encouraged people not to give to government relief funds or to the Chinese Red Cross but to donate directly to survivors, saying: **"As the news from the mouthpiece for the Party organisations cannot be believed, we dare not believe in the Party organisations."**

Chinese media reports that millions of pounds have been committed to help re-build the earthquake-affected region. Free Tibet will be working with others, including the human rights monitoring organisation Tibet Watch, to report on the impact of these funds. It is important that Tibetans are given equal access to the employment opportunities these funds will create and that new infrastructure meets the needs and aspirations of the Tibetan people.

Second

Chinese policies that increasingly marginalise Tibetans in their own country threaten not only Tibetans' prosperity but also their identity. The Chinese administration trumpets the growing prosperity of the Tibetan plateau in propaganda stunts like the so-called 'Heavenly Tibet' pavilion at the Shanghai Expo. The truth is that Tibetans' human rights are being violated across the plateau and Tibetans are being squeezed out of the booming economy. Chinese investment of 310 billion yuan (approximately £30 billion) since 2001 has not been used to prioritise Tibetan needs such as health and education. Rather it led to a massive influx of non-Tibetan migrants and Chinese state-owned companies onto the plateau who siphon off most of this capital before it can touch Tibetan lives. To make matters worse, policies in employment and education grossly

“Even educated Tibetans, such as those who have graduated from Tibet University, many of them are unemployed.”

Tibetan children grow up with limited opportunities for the future

class citizens

favour the use of the Chinese 'mother-tongue' over Tibetan, leaving Tibetans further excluded from many of the most prosperous areas of the economy.

This economic and cultural marginalisation contributes to Tibetans' rejection of Chinese rule and played a significant part in fuelling the Spring protests of 2008.

Economic marginalisation

The greatest proportion of Chinese investment and subsidies in Tibet goes into the areas of government administration and infrastructure. China has a history in Tibet of awarding contracts to Chinese state-owned companies so that the income generated from projects in Tibet goes straight back into Chinese companies and pockets. Contracts are used as a means of rewarding those close to the Chinese regime, giving beneficiaries good reason not to criticise the regime as they continue to gain financially from the system.

China has created vast numbers of government administration jobs on the plateau. These are only open to Chinese speakers, thus excluding many Tibetans and allowing the administration to invite Chinese migrants from outside Tibet to take up posts. In this way the administration is tightening its control over the plateau by steadily but surely shifting the balance of the population so that already in some areas, like Lhasa, Chinese immigrants are thought to outnumber the Tibetan population.

The railway from China to Lhasa, completed in 2006, facilitates this huge population transfer. It has also allowed for far more ambitious mining projects on the plateau. The Chinese regime now has the means to transport mined products out of Tibet in far greater amounts, essentially taking the riches of the plateau out of Tibetan hands and straight into the Chinese administration's coffers.

Very little is invested on the plateau in areas that will benefit Tibetans: the Chinese administration invests very little in the development of the rural, agricultural economy in which most Tibetans work. To make matters worse, less than 7 per cent of investment went into education and health in 2005. As a result, according to a 2009 United Nations Development Programme report, whilst in the People's Republic of China literacy in the general population was 93 per cent in 2007, in Tibet in the same year literacy levels were less than half this at only 44 per cent – the lowest of all Chinese provinces.

A Tibetan man from the Chamdo region voiced the sense of despair and growing marginalisation that is felt by many Tibetans: **"The primary reason for Tibetans getting lower paid jobs is that they are mostly not educated and they don't speak Chinese. Secondly they are not very professionally skilled and those from rural areas**

don't have the social foundation and background in the cities. So to get a job is difficult, let alone getting a good job... Even educated Tibetans such as those who have graduated from Tibet University, many of them are unemployed."

Tibetan becomes the second language in Tibet

Chinese is now the main language throughout the education system in Tibet and there is considerable evidence that Tibetans struggle to complete their education in a language that is not their own.

A Tibetan boy from Ngabring county in Tibet spoke to Free Tibet about his experience of struggling at school and dropping out due to difficulties in suddenly having to adjust to being taught in Chinese. His experience is typical:

"When I attended the County Middle School ... all the subjects were taught in Chinese except Tibetan language. Even though there were no Chinese students at the middle school, there were Chinese teachers. It was a problem for us to follow the subjects that were taught in Chinese.

All of us who had been taught in Tibet at the village school were not good at Chinese and found it hard to understand subjects like maths and physics. Because I was not being taught in Tibetan, my school performance was not as good as it was at the village school. After Middle School I chose to go to a vocational training school but I failed the exam and had to go home where I worked doing housework."

Putting Tibetan needs first

Now that the immediate search and rescue response to the tragic earthquake in Jyekundo (Chinese: Yushu) is complete, Free Tibet wants to ensure that the vast amounts of money that have been donated and allocated for rebuilding the devastated area are neither misappropriated nor mis-spent.

It is vital that employment opportunities that are created as a result of the reconstruction effort are equally available to local Tibetans as to incoming migrant Chinese and Chinese state-owned companies. It is often the case that jobs in the construction industry are not open to non-Chinese speakers which could exclude many local Tibetans in Jyekundo county. It is also extremely important, if Tibetans are not to be further marginalised, that reconstruction is done in consultation with local Tibetans with due regard for preserving the strongly Tibetan nature of Jyekundo.



www.freetibet.org/about

Get involved

Tibet mass lobby

A big thank you to the more than one hundred Tibetans and Tibet supporters who attended the mass lobby of Parliament on 10 March, organised by a coalition of Tibet support groups.

At the mass lobby we asked MPs to sign Early Day Motion (EDM) 345 which calls for an inquiry into the effectiveness of the UK's policies on China and human rights. We are happy to report back that 130 MPs signed the EDM which will provide us with good leverage for change in the new parliament. The number of signatories clearly indicates a growing unease with China's human rights record and UK interactions that ignore this.

Carole, a long-term Free Tibet supporter who met her MP Jeremy Corbyn, describes her experience:

“Jeremy Corbyn gave generously of his time, well over an hour. He proved to be knowledgeable about the Tibet situation but also asked some very probing questions of us. We felt it was one of the most positive and productive meetings with a parliamentarian.”



Over 100 Tibetans and Tibet supporters met their MPs during the mass lobby

Free Tibet Raffle 2010

Free Tibet is excited to launch its 2010 raffle with a wonderful selection of prizes for our lucky supporters. Free Tibet would like to thank the generous donors who have made this raffle possible! A £1 ticket could see you exploring the wonderful town of Mont St Michel, dining by the shores of Loch Earn or discovering the beautiful Lake District. Why not try your luck today?

First Prize: A one week stay for two, including breakfast, at The Haven guesthouse, Normandy, France. Positioned in an acre of garden, this renovated old stone farmhouse is only 45 minutes from Mont St Michel and will provide the lucky winner with a tranquil and relaxing stay. www.de-stressinfrance.com

Second Prize: Three nights of luxury for two at The Four Seasons Hotel, St Fillans, Scotland, including breakfast and dinner at the two AA Red Rosette restaurant. This wonderful hotel is situated on the banks of Loch Earn, perhaps one of the most enviable settings in Scotland. www.thefourseasonshotel.co.uk

Third Prize: A four night stay for two at Nab Cottage in the centre of the Lake District National Park, an area of outstanding beauty and tranquillity. The cottage overlooks a small lake surrounded by mountains and in 2009 was listed in 'Britain's 50 best kept secrets' by the Daily Telegraph. www.nabcottage.com

Fourth Prize: A three night stay for two at La Grande Maison in the Rhone Valley, Switzerland. This 200-year-old listed building has fantastic panoramic views. www.lagrandemaison.ch

Fifth Prize: A four night stay for two at the Old Hall Cow Shed, a renovated cow barn on an organic smallholding in the beautiful Waveney Valley. www.bikeways.org.uk

Sixth Prize: A Tibetan thangka donated by Pink Lotus. www.pinklotus.co.uk

Seventh Prize: A two night stay for two at Crossaig Lodge, Kintyre, Scotland. www.crossaiglodge.co.uk

Eighth Prize: A cooking course for 4 people and a Popina goodie bag, including a selection of sweet and savoury treats, and a Christmas cake. www.popina.co.uk

Runner-up Prizes x3: £50 gift voucher from ethical clothing company Komodo for their online store. www.komodo.co.uk

Raffle only open to residents of the UK excluding Northern Ireland. If you think you may have a gambling problem please seek advice and support which can be found at www.gambleaware.co.uk



www.freetibet.org/support



The Haven

Four Seasons Hotel

Nab Cottage

Free Tibet would like to thank our new Life Members: P Manfield, H Mendick, S Yates, J Smith, M Povey

Workshops at Free Tibet

Learn how to get active locally

Free Tibet's local groups have been increasingly active, organising a range of events from information stalls in town centres to sponsored treks, film screenings and vigils. Supporters not only raised awareness in their communities about the situation in Tibet, but in 2009 they also raised over £8,000 for Free Tibet campaigns. Thank you to you all!

We would like to build the capacity of our local groups and so we are inviting all group members and anyone who is thinking of starting a local group to a day of lively workshops at Free Tibet's office in London. The workshops are designed to build skills, knowledge and confidence, enabling you to run a successful group in their area. We will also be providing information on key campaigning areas. The workshops will take place in a comfortable and enjoyable environment where local groups and supporters can meet to share skills and experience. Come along and see how easy it can be to organise local events!

If you are interested in learning more, whether you are part of a local group or an individual supporter who is interested in starting a group, please contact Gabriel at gabriel@freetibet.org or call 020 7324 4605.



Gifts in wills

A gift in your will to Free Tibet will help us to continue fighting the abuse of human rights in Tibet into the future.

If you have already included Free Tibet in your will, please accept our most grateful thanks on behalf of all the Tibetans your gift will support. If you are thinking of making or amending your will, we advise you to see a solicitor.

If you would like to receive any information about leaving a gift in your will or how your gift could support future generations please contact legacies@freetibet.org or call 020 7324 4605.

Original works of art for sale

Here's your chance to own a unique painting and raise funds for Free Tibet! Over 40 world-renowned tattoo artists have donated original pieces based on Tibetan iconography. These stunning works of art are now for sale at affordable prices on Free Tibet's website where you can view the entire gallery.



www.freetibet.org/shop

World Cup Yaks!

World Cup fever kicks in this June, and though Tibet cannot compete you can still celebrate the competition and support Free Tibet at the same time!

There are now over 200 Virtual Yaks on the Virtual Plateau on our website and every supporter who buys one helps raise funds for the campaign against forced nomadic resettlement. You can now decorate your yak with the flags and scarves of World Cup teams and send them to friends via email. How about sending a yak in your friend's team's colours when they win a match?



www.freetibet.org/virtualyak



Buy a virtual yak to fly your team's flag this summer!

The UK, China and you

Free Tibet and Free Tibet supporters have been campaigning hard for the UK government to take a much firmer approach with the Chinese administration on human rights in Tibet. Persuading China to improve dramatically on human rights and to implement reform has to be a priority for the new British government. This is not only because morally it is the right thing to do, but because it is also in Britain's national interest to do so.

During the recent General Election you responded magnificently to our campaign to lobby parliamentary candidates to take the pledge to promote human rights in Tibet and China if they were elected. Over 200 candidates took the pledge of whom 36 have been elected. We are already in touch with these MPs as well as with our other 'Champions of Tibet' who continue to serve as parliamentarians.

The previous government's strategy of 'constructive engagement' failed to deliver results on human rights. The Foreign Affairs Select Committee acknowledged that **"there remains little evidence that the British Government's policy of constructive dialogue with China has led to any significant improvements."** More than 120 MPs joined Free Tibet in our demand for a change to this strategy.



The Labour government pursued a two-sided approach with China, making strong statements criticising China's human rights record to UK audiences, for instance as in the recently released Foreign Office Annual Human Rights Report, whilst remaining silent in public when in front of a Chinese audience. When the former Foreign Secretary David Miliband visited China in March he failed to make any public statements of concern regarding human rights in Tibet despite the recent executions, pending death sentences and the fact that at the very same time as he was in Beijing the Chinese administration was launching a punitive 'strike-hard' campaign in Lhasa. It is vital that British politicians make strong statements on rights to the Chinese media and public, not just to Chinese government counterparts behind closed doors.

There is a practical as well as a moral imperative to this call for greater respect for human rights in China. Disregard for rights in China is leading to a great deal of civil unrest, not just in Tibet but across China. Official figures in China report more than 90,000 separate incidents of protest taking place in each of the last three years; it is likely that the number is actually far greater. The vast majority of protesters tend to be people who have not benefitted from the growth of the economy or those whose land has been confiscated or polluted as a direct result of China's rapid industrialisation.

The authorities' reaction to such protests is almost always violently repressive. This short-sighted response simply fuels further dissent, building up a pressure-cooker situation in China that has the potential to destabilise the country, stopping China's growth in its tracks. If this happens then the repercussions will be felt throughout the global economy, certainly in the UK economy in which China plays an increasingly large role.

China's disregard for human rights also has ecological repercussions. The current policy on the Tibetan plateau of resettling Tibetan nomads enables social control, increased mining and the building of dams but threatens the ecology of the plateau and the well-being of seven of Asia's major rivers which begin on the plateau. These rivers provide essential water for over one billion people living down-river in China, Nepal, India and beyond. If this water supply continues to be compromised the human, environmental and social costs will be immeasurable.

Only political and legal reform with a far greater respect for human rights will address the deepening, pervasive discontent in Tibet and China. If Britain and the international community want the Chinese economy to act as an engine for global economic recovery, then it is imperative that they promote the development of human rights in Tibet and China in order to achieve a stable and prosperous international relative.



www.freetibet.org/campaigns

Students and artists defiant

Tensions have been rising in eastern Tibet throughout March and April, following an increase in the military presence and surveillance in the area. A series of protests took place in Serthar and Machu county beginning in March. Radio Free Asia reported that dozens of school children from the Tibetan Middle School in Machu protested against Chinese authorities. One local resident is reported as saying: **“The school is surrounded by armed security forces and all the students are locked inside the campus. They are not allowed to move in and out. Tension is extremely high in the Machu county area.”**

Scores of students were detained and questioned whilst the school’s headmaster, Kyabchen Dedrol, and two teaching assistants were fired. We continue to receive reports of tension in this area over two months later.

Free Tibet has also received reports of students protesting at two schools in Kanlho, Sangchu county. Regarding protesting students from Kanlho Prefecture Middle School, a local resident said: **“Police and People’s Armed Police surrounded the students and forced them back into the school compound. About 20 students were detained and were later released after being interrogated.”**

Despite heavy surveillance and the risk of imprisonment, acts of protest and rejection of government policy continue not only on the streets of Tibet but also on the internet and in

the arts. In response, in the last half year we have seen a growing trend in Tibet, especially in Amdo, of the silencing of writers, artists and bloggers who criticise government policy and speak up for freedom and human rights. Popular Amdo singer Tashi Dhondup was sentenced to almost two years imprisonment for writing and distributing songs about freedom. At the same time Kunchok Tsephel, the founder of a well-respected literary website, received a fifteen year sentence on unknown charges.

When Tibetans speak out against the Chinese occupation they knowingly risk months in detention without trial, torture and lengthy prison sentences. Free Tibet aims to give witness to the actions of these brave Tibetans by publicising their cases and campaigning for their release with the help of Free Tibet supporters. Our Urgent Action letter-writing scheme raises cases with authorities, speaking up for Tibetans’ fundamental human rights.

Tashi Dhondup was sentenced to two years for writing and distributing songs about freedom



Urgent Campaigns

Join Free Tibet’s rapid response team!

Help make a difference. Join Free Tibet’s Urgent Action scheme, a letter-writing scheme campaigning on behalf of political prisoners and lobbying governments on other urgent Tibet-related issues.

Experience shows that international awareness of individuals at risk can limit further mistreatment: your letters about political prisoners Golog Jigme and Jigme Gyatso contributed to the protection of their welfare in 2009.

Signing up for Urgent Actions is easy through our website: www.freetibet.org/campaigns. Alternatively call the office on 020 7324 4605 or email mail@freetibet.org.

Another Tibetan sentenced to death

Following the tragic executions of two Tibetans in Lhasa in October 2009, Free Tibet has serious concerns about the welfare of three more Tibetans, Tenzin Phuntsog, Kangtsuk and 21-year-old Penkyi, who are serving suspended death sentences.

It has emerged that yet another Tibetan has been handed down a death sentence with a two year reprieve, on charges of ‘inciting separatism’ and ‘disturbing social order’. Pema Yeshe, 28, was sentenced in November

2009, but news of the sentence was not released until February this year. Two other Tibetans, Tsewang Gyatso and Sonam Gonpo, were given sentences of 16 years and life respectively. The three were accused of distributing pamphlets calling for independence and setting fire to a local government building. It has been suggested that, like other trials resulting in death sentences in 2009, the three Tibetans were denied their right to fair trials.

US support for Tibet

Following a period of increasingly strained US-China relations and despite heavy criticism from China, United States President Barack Obama demonstrated his strong support for the Dalai Lama by meeting him at the White House in February. Thank you to all our US supporters who lobbied President Obama so effectively!

As the Dalai Lama and President Obama sat together at the White House, President Obama would have been aware of the strong public

support in the US for this meeting. A CNN poll revealed that 75 per cent of Americans think Tibet should be an independent country and the majority of Americans believe it is more important for the US to take a tougher stance with China on human rights than to maintain good relations with them. The President is clearly reflecting the will of the American people.

It is also clear that the US government regards the Dalai Lama as

more than simply a religious leader. A White House spokesperson described the Dalai Lama as a “spokesman for Tibetan rights”, whilst the President himself praised the Dalai Lama’s initiative to break the political impasse in Tibet through the dialogue process.

As news of the historic meeting spread in Tibet, Tibetans celebrated this clear show of solidarity from the US by letting off fireworks in Rebkong in eastern Tibet and with prayers for the long life of the Dalai Lama in Ngaba. The importance to the Tibetan people of knowing that we, around the world, stand in solidarity with them cannot be overestimated.

The meeting between the two leaders was one of a series of measures taken by the US that demonstrate a tougher stance with the Chinese administration. The White House has also become increasingly critical of China’s refusal to appreciate the value of its currency, the yuan, as this allows China to continue to gain an unfair commercial advantage by exporting artificially cheap products to the US.



PEETE SOUZA

President Obama meets the Dalai Lama in the White House



www.freetibet.org/us

Challenges to Chinese censorship policies

The internet presents a particular challenge to the authority of the Chinese administration as it offers alternative perspectives on the situation in Tibet, exposing the propaganda of claims that all is well in Tibet.

Internet giant Google has directly challenged the strict controls on information access in China by refusing to comply with internet filtering laws which block access to information about topics such as Tibet, Taiwan and the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. Chinese users are now redirected to the uncensored pages of Google’s Hong Kong website. Free Tibet has campaigned against Google for being complicit with China’s censorship and welcomes their decision to stop censoring search results.

Google’s refusal to be forced into filtering web content is embarrassing to the Chinese government who must now rely on their own content filters to prevent Chinese citizens from accessing forbidden sites. Google’s decision also led to outrage and criticism of the government by many Chinese internet users. Some Chinese netizens (citizens of the internet) left wreaths outside the Google.cn

headquarters when the possibility arose of Google abandoning the Chinese market.

Following Google’s decision, US-based technology giant Go Daddy announced that they will no longer sell domain names in China because of the amount of personal information the Chinese administration demands on applicants. In the wake of the increased condemnation of Chinese censorship another US technology giant Dell threatened to move its operations away from China to India, although they have failed to follow this through.

In its efforts to restrict the free flow of information China also intimidates internet users in Tibet by arresting Tibetans who use the internet to share and disseminate information or anti-government opinions, as seen by the harsh sentences for active Tibetan netizens Kunga Tseyang and Kunchog Tsepel that we reported earlier in the year.

Google’s decision to stop censoring web content in China demonstrates that big businesses can challenge the Chinese government’s controls, and it is hoped that others will follow.

The politics of religion

Hundreds of candles were lit by Free Tibet supporters on the steps of St Martin-in-the-Fields church in London's Trafalgar Square on Sunday 25 April in a solemn remembrance of the 21st birthday of the Panchen Lama, and to mark the fifteen years since he was taken by the Chinese authorities. Many thanks to the hundreds of Free Tibet supporters who sponsored candles that formed the words 'Free the Panchen Lama'. Photographs of the Panchen Lama as a young child – the last known picture of him – and hundreds of flickering candles attracted the interest of passers-by attending the London Marathon; Free Tibet supporters who were there had in-depth conversations about the Panchen Lama and Tibet with many of them.

The tragedy of the abduction of the Panchen Lama is a vivid example of China's efforts to manipulate and control Tibetan Buddhism, its traditions and its leadership structure. In this way they hope to tighten their control over the Tibetan people for whom the Buddhist religion is such a key element of their identity. After abducting the true Panchen Lama, China appointed their own 'Panchen Lama', a boy called Gyaltzen Norbu, who Tibetans call the Panchen Zuma – the false Panchen. This young man has been groomed for a political role. In March the Panchen Zuma became the youngest delegate ever appointed to the People's Political Consultative Conference, China's top political advisory body.

It is not only the leadership structure of Tibetan Buddhism which is under siege. Through patriotic re-education campaigns the Chinese regime tries to force people to alter their closely-held beliefs and identity. For example, monks and nuns are required to denounce their beloved spiritual leader the Dalai Lama and are forced to swear allegiance to the Communist party. As part of a wider crackdown on dissent, patriotic re-education campaigns have intensified in monasteries and nunneries since the 2008 uprising. Patriotic re-education creates the very conditions in which torture and ill-treatment can take place: Tibetans are often detained for refusing to co-operate and held in detention until they 'confess' or make denunciations.



www.freetibet.org/campaigns



Free Tibet supporters sponsored candles to mark the Panchen Lama's 21st birthday

- **Sino-Tibetan dialogue:** The 9th round of talks between China and representatives of the Dalai Lama took place in February, but did not yield any concrete results. However, the Dalai Lama's envoys reported that there were some encouraging signs, as they believe China realises that **"a failed strategy in Tibet is a problem for China."**
- **March crackdown:** An official Chinese news site reported that 435 people were interrogated in Lhasa as part of a 'strike hard' campaign on the eve of the sensitive 10 March Tibetan Uprising anniversary. Twelve people were reported to have been detained but further details were unobtainable.
- **400 mourn Ngaba dead:** Around 400 Tibetans gathered in the main market square in Ngaba County during Tibetan New Year to mourn those killed during the March 2008 protests. Chinese authorities allowed them to demonstrate their solidarity with those who had lost their lives by saying prayers.
- **Tibetan monk convicted on unknown charges:** After two years in detention without charge Ngakchung, a monk from Serthar Monastery, was sentenced to seven years imprisonment in March 2010. The charges have not been made public and it is not possible to verify if he was afforded any of the legal rights guaranteed under the Chinese constitution.
- **Spanish court case thrown out:** A trial into human rights violations in Tibet was dropped after pressure from China and others. By Spanish law, universal jurisdiction cases in Spain must now contain a direct link to Spain.
- **New Tibetan airport planned:** China has announced the construction of a new airport near Mount Everest, to be named the 'Peace Airport'. The construction is another stage in China's 'Western Development Strategy' to cement its control of Tibetan areas.



Tibet is for LIFE

**Free Tibet Life Membership –
advocating the rights of future generations.**

**Sign up for Life Membership for £500.
Help the next generation of Tibetans grow up in a free Tibet!**

You will become part of a growing group of Life Members who, in addition to the usual membership benefits, will receive:

- Copies of all Free Tibet's publications
- Invitations to all Free Tibet's special events
- An exclusive invitation to meet the staff and the Director of the campaign
- A new Free Tibet t-shirt every year
- Acknowledgement of your support in the Free Tibet magazine and website

To become a life member, please complete the form on the magazine cover letter or call 020 7324 4605