

FREE TIBET

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free
TIBET

• Festivals • Tenzin Delek Rinpoche • Diplomacy and Tibet •



Free Tibet Director
Eleanor Byrne-
Rosengren

Dear friends

The Summer Shindig in August was definitely one of the highlights of this year for me. Someone at the event asked me if I knew we were “preaching to the converted”. We saw and welcomed many new faces at the event, in fact, but the comment got me thinking about the importance of coming together with people who are already Tibet supporters. So often we meet people at vigils or demonstrations in the wake of the latest atrocity. On a daily basis, we deal with information and issues that are sobering and often distressing and while Tibetan resistance is always inspiring, we all wish we had more good news stories to share. So having the chance to come together with supporters in shared solidarity is a rewarding and enjoyable break from the pressure and a reminder that so many other people share our passion and stand with us in our work. I know that many of the people who came along also enjoyed having the chance to meet other like-minded individuals, exchange stories and celebrate Tibetan resistance. And being able to give each other that little bit of encouragement is important because this is a fight we intend to win, however long it takes.

We will need that spirit of solidarity and resistance more than ever this year. The Chinese President will be making an official state visit to the UK in October and we hope to provide the kind of welcome he really deserves. At the time of writing this we don't have precise details of his visit, but we expect it to be in the latter half of October and hope that as many people as possible will be able to join us and make sure he sees Tibetan flags flying freely wherever he goes. We will be providing additional details via email and social media as soon as we are able.

With best wishes

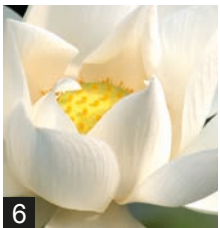
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Our vision is a free Tibet in which Tibetans are able to determine their own future and the human rights of all are respected.

Free Tibet campaigns for an end to China's occupation of Tibet and for international recognition of Tibetans' right to freedom. We mobilise active support for the Tibetan cause, champion human rights and challenge those whose actions help sustain the occupation.

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Spreading the word this summer

We have had an action-packed summer spreading the word and raising awareness about Tibet.

Thank you to everybody that showed their support for a free Tibet and jumped at the chance to be photographed with an 'I Love Tibet' poster.

Glastonbury

Thousands of festival-goers gathered around Glastonbury's Stone Circle on the final day of the festival to hear the Dalai Lama speak about compassion, non-violence and the oneness of humanity. Free Tibet was there, explaining our campaigns and handing out leaflets to all. We were delighted to see so many people sign up for the latest news on Tibet or make a purchase from our stall. Later in the day, the Dalai Lama joined Patti Smith on the main stage with an 80th birthday cake as tens of thousands gathered to sing 'Happy Birthday'. We are pleased to report there were Free Tibet badges, flags and posters dotted brightly throughout the crowd.

WOMAD

In spite of the mud and rain, visitors to WOMAD, the World of Music, Arts and Dance festival, couldn't resist stopping by the Free Tibet marquee to find out a little about what we do. Whether chatting about campaigns over a cup of tea, checking out our beautiful range of dolls or signing our latest petitions, it was great to meet so many new faces. From inquisitive children to some of our longest-serving supporters, we ensured

everybody left inspired to support the campaign and to raise awareness for a free Tibet.

Summer Shindig

We held our Summer Shindig on Friday 14 August – an evening of music and film on the theme of 'home'. There was a special reception for Mi Tse supporters at the start of the evening, which included a chance to meet the team and chat about Free Tibet's work. Then everyone enjoyed the premiere of our new Free Tibet short film, some lovely Tibetan momos and a screening of the poignant documentary 'Bringing Tibet Home'. An art and photography auction took place and guests were moved by a talented Tibetan musician performing traditional nomadic songs. It was great to see so many supporters and new faces on the evening, and we were able to raise over £2,400. We look forward to seeing you next year!

Mi Tse means 'lifelong' in Tibetan and with a single one-off gift of £500 you can become a Mi Tse supporter of Free Tibet. By supporting us for life, you will help ensure the campaign for Tibetan freedom endures for as long as it takes. In addition, Mi Tse supporters receive the first copies of Free Tibet publications, invitations to special events, a branded t-shirt and exclusive updates from the Director. Please fill out the form on the cover letter to become a Mi Tse supporter or get in touch for more details.

We are delighted to welcome new Mi Tse supporters: Jeni Hall and Shobha Trivedi



Demanding
justice for
Tibet's jailed
monks and nuns.

In July, the tragic news arrived that Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, one of Tibet's most significant political prisoners, had died in prison in Chengdu. He was thirteen years into a life sentence. His unjust conviction, appalling treatment in jail and the shocking developments after his death were a reminder of the price many of Tibet's monks and nuns pay for their vital role in standing up for Tibet and against China's rule.

Free Tibet has launched a new campaign, Robed Resisters, to highlight jailed religious figures and take action to prevent them meeting the same fate as Tenzin Delek Rinpoche.

A litany of injustice

Tenzin Delek Rinpoche was a highly respected senior monk, convicted in 2002 for his alleged involvement in bombings that took place in Chengdu in China's Sichuan province. He was tried in secret and always protested his innocence. China has never produced any real evidence linking him to the bombings. Originally sentenced to death, his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment upon appeal – although his co-accused in the 2002 trial was executed.

His family were allowed to visit him just once during his imprisonment, in 2013. They believe he had been subjected to torture and that existing, serious health problems were exacerbated by inadequate medical care. A worldwide campaign for his release on medical parole followed – a call endorsed by a number of governments, including the US and the UK. The Chinese government ignored these calls.

In July his family were suddenly summoned to the prison. They were then denied access to him, however, and on 12 July were informed that he had died in his cell. His family and other Tibetans from the local area called for the release of his body, only to be threatened and arrested.

A peaceful demonstration in his hometown was broken up with beatings and gunfire, leading to the hospitalisation of many protesters. Despite these pleas – and in contravention of Chinese law – the prison authorities cremated Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's body, without his family's consent. This denied them and their community the opportunity to perform proper funeral services and prevented any independent assessment of the cause of his death.

In a final insult, as his family and fellow monks were bringing his ashes home, the police seized them back and his sister and niece were arrested. Although his family members were later released, the whereabouts of the ashes are unknown.

The price of resistance

Monasteries play an important role in Tibetan communities and are vital in preserving and protecting Tibet's culture and language. As a result, they also feel the full weight of China's oppression. Communist officials interfere in their activities and monitor monks for signs of loyalty to the Dalai Lama. Many monasteries have police stations close by or even inside their walls. Thousands have been shut by China, while heavily-armed security forces intimidate religious gatherings. Monks and nuns are routinely forced to demonstrate their loyalty and even fly Chinese Communist flags on their buildings.

Undeterred, they continue to brave the repercussions of their opposition to China's rule and activist monks have been at the forefront of Tibetan protests for many years. As a consequence, many are now in jail. They may disappear for months at a time, before facing show trials in which they are convicted for "crimes against the Chinese state".

Robed resistance

Like Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, many endure torture and long prison sentences. Their illnesses are often left untreated and they can go years without visits from family and friends.

Defending the defenders

Our new campaign, Robed Resistors, focusses on jailed monks inside Tibet. It provides an opportunity to pay tribute to their courage and sacrifices while also challenging the stereotype of passive Tibetan monks who are detached from the world. More importantly, it is a means of taking direct action on their behalf. Each month, we will focus on a different prisoner and provide information online about how to raise his case with local authorities, demand better prison conditions and send him a message of support. On the right are three of the prisoners we are featuring.



Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, 1950-2015.



ROBED RESISTORS

Tibet's jailed monks

NAME: **Bangri Tsamtrul Rinpoche**

DETAINED: 1999

SENTENCE: Life sentence in 1999, later commuted to 18 years.

REASON FOR IMPRISONMENT:

“Splitting the state”, though his actual ‘crime’ has not been disclosed. Possibly tied to his links with a man who tried to “raise a Tibetan flag and detonate explosives”.



NAME: **Lomig** (also known as Jo Jamyang)

DETAINED: 17 April 2015

REASON FOR IMPRISONMENT:

At the time of going to press, Lomig has still not been charged. He is believed to be detained for writing articles critical of China’s policies in Tibet.



NAME: **Tsangyang Gyatso**

DETAINED: 17 March 2014

SENTENCE: 12 years

REASON FOR IMPRISONMENT:

Tsangyang Gyatso was charged with “separatist” activities, including plotting to protest with other monks against the Chinese government.



www.freetibet.org/robed-resistors

Spotlight on torture in Tibet at the UN

Over the summer, Tibet Watch, Free Tibet and Gu Chu Sum (the association for Tibetan former political prisoners) have been continuing our joint work on torture for submission to the UN's Committee Against Torture. Our second report will be sent to the committee at the end

of October. We will be focussing on the death of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche and highlighting the cases of political prisoners who remain at risk of torture in Chinese prisons.

China will be formally reviewed by the committee during its 56th session, which takes place in November

and December. In addition to submitting our reports, it may be possible to give evidence in person during the session and we hope to be able to take a former political prisoner to Geneva so they can tell the committee about their own experience of torture. Personal accounts are always the strongest evidence and we also believe it is important for the UN to hear Tibetan voices directly.

We also hope to secure dedicated funds to allow us to arrange a speaking tour for a Tibetan torture survivor once our work at the UN has been completed. This will give us the chance to share our evidence with an even wider audience and also give our supporters the chance to directly engage with survivors.



“The authorities consider us Tibetans worse than animals. They do not value us as humans. Once you enter the torture centre, you feel your life is over. Death awaits you.”

Golog Jigme

Remembering Tibet's fallen

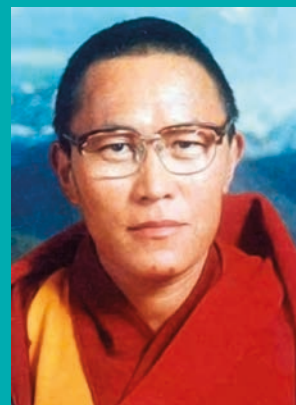
In February 2015 we introduced the White Lotus Book of Remembrance as a way of honouring all the Tibetans who have lost their lives as a result of China's occupation. The response has been very moving; with many of our supporters contributing messages and donations in memory of Tibet's fallen. The messages are inscribed in the

White Lotus Book, which is kept in our office until we are able to deliver it to a free Tibet, and also published on our online Wall of Remembrance.

We know that Tenzin Delek Rinpoche held a special place in many people's hearts. One of the Tibet Watch team, for example, told us that Tenzin Delek's

case was the first one she had worked on and that the length of her connection with him made the loss feel very personal.

Please consider contributing a message to honour Tenzin's memory. We will keep it safe until the day Tibet is free.



Action

To keep the vision of Tibet's fallen alive and make your contribution to the White Lotus Book of Remembrance, please call us on 0207 324 4605 or visit www.freetibet.org/whitelotus

Let your hopes for Tibetan freedom live on



A gift in your will is an empowering way to influence the future for Tibet. It will honour your memory and serve for years to come to intensify the campaign for Tibetan freedom.



David Waterston (MSSW / MA Law) is a trained member of the Society of Will Writers and fully insured to write wills. He has many clients in the Buddhist community across the UK and has advised Free Tibet on our legacy programme. Here he answers some of your questions:

Why should I make a will?

There are many reasons. You can decide how to divide your possessions among family and friends and give to causes which are important to you. Without a will your property is divided up according to the law, which is unlikely to be exactly as you would choose. If the will is clear and carefully considered you are also doing as much as you can to prevent disputes and avoid any doubt about your wishes.

What about my children?

You should consider the needs of your family very carefully. In certain circumstances the law allows them to claim on your estate if you do not make reasonable provision. Whatever you do, it's best to talk to your family about your plans so they don't come as a surprise. Your children are then less likely to feel they have lost out and instead feel happy that you have been able to give to a cause that is important to you. Perhaps they will become a supporter too!

Can a gift to charity help me pay less inheritance tax?

It could. Spouses and civil partners can take any amount free of inheritance tax. Currently you can also give away £325k to other beneficiaries without paying inheritance tax. Above that, inheritance tax is charged at 40%. This can be complicated by other factors such as gifts you give in the

seven years before you die. Gifts to registered charities, however, are not subject to inheritance tax. You can take advantage of this to minimise the amount of tax payable from your estate on your death, although this is something you may wish to discuss with a professional advisor. Remember, it is Free Tibet's research partner Tibet Watch which is the registered charity.

What are the ways I can leave a gift to Free Tibet and/or Tibet Watch?

You can leave a gift of a specific amount of money or a percentage share of the residue of your estate. How you do this will depend on your circumstances. If you aren't sure how much will be in your estate when you die then a percentage share may be best. You could leave a specific item such as a car, but remember that if you give the car away or specify 'I give my Ford Focus' but meanwhile swap it for a VW Golf then your gift won't take effect!

How can I change my will?

The best way is to make a new one, although you could make a codicil to add a specific gift. Studies show that self-made wills are more likely to end up causing costly disputes than those drawn up with the help of a professional.

Greengate Wills offer free consultations.

In addition, Free Tibet supporters get a 10% discount on will writing until 1 March 2016. Call 0203 222 6073 or visit www.greengatewills.co.uk

Greengate
Wills

If you have already remembered us in your will, please accept our thanks. To receive more information on how you can help secure Tibet's future with a gift in your will simply email Josey Cullen at Josey@freetibet.org or visit www.freetibet.org/wills

Campaigns update...

Pushing back against China's Confucius Classrooms

Our campaign to challenge the Chinese government's classrooms in UK schools (see last magazine) has scored a number of successes recently. Our aim has been to ensure that wherever Beijing has an opportunity to promote positive messages about China and attempts to buy the friendship of young people, students are also given the truth about Beijing's treatment of its own citizens and the people of Tibet.

The campaign has continued to generate extensive media

coverage, stimulating vital debate about China's role in our communities. Many schools have welcomed our teaching resources and information about the programme – one has even agreed to put the Tibetan flag we supplied inside its Confucius Classroom. The body responsible for administering the Confucius Classrooms programme in Scotland has agreed to include our teaching pack in the materials it makes available to schools and we are following up with the bodies from England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We are also

The Telegraph

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'UK schools advance Chinese propaganda,' activists say

Primary and secondary schools are advancing Chinese "propaganda" without proper scrutiny, campaign groups have claimed

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lobbying relevant politicians and will keep you informed about the latest developments.

Beijing wins Olympics but campaign scores victory for Tibet

On 31 July, Beijing narrowly won the competition to host the Winter Olympics in 2022. At the beginning of the year, China's capital was the comfortable favourite to win the Games: in the end, its margin of victory was only 44 votes to 40.

Free Tibet was one of four groups leading the global campaign against Beijing's bid. Our goal was to use the bid to raise the profile of Tibet and to show the world and the International Olympics Committee that giving the Games to China again

would be a spur to international action from Tibet groups, just as it was in 2008.

We achieved that goal. The campaign was covered in major articles in media across the world, including on the day that China won the vote. It even won the rare honour of being criticised directly by Chinese state media – ironically, generating more press attention for the campaign in Western media. The strategy also included a daring demonstration by young Tibetan campaigners in Switzerland which saw them disrupt a meeting in which the Chinese delegation was presenting its case. We also combined forces with other campaigners, including Uyghur and Mongolian activists and Chinese dissidents, to lobby the IOC.

The campaign was very actively supported by Golog Jigme, the Tibetan political prisoner now living in Switzerland who was jailed and tortured for making a film about Tibetans' response to the 2008 Olympics (pictured left at IOC headquarters in Lausanne). In a statement when Beijing won the Games, Golog Jigme said:

"I hope my fellow Tibetans in Tibet do not pay a price in 2022 like the one I and others paid for the Olympic Games in 2008. The IOC must now accept responsibility for its decision and that includes withdrawing the honour of the Games from China if it continues its repression in Tibet."

Although it narrowly failed to prevent Beijing winning the Games, the coordinated international campaign that Free Tibet helped to lead showed that the Tibet movement is prepared again to use the global stage of the Olympic Games to highlight Tibet's cause and pressure governments to take action. Watch this space as 2022 draws closer.



TIBETAN YOUTH ASSOCIATION EUROPE

News update...



Police beatings follow staged cultural show

In Nangchen County, authorities ordered 10 Tibetan townships to prepare for a summer performance in lavish traditional costume. Armed police arrived on the final day, however, and for unknown reasons attacked and injured 30 Tibetans.

Elsewhere, in Driru County, authorities used the threat of a five-year ban on the harvesting of caterpillar fungus – a highly-valued herbal remedy and lucrative source of income for locals – if villagers did not comply with demands to stage a similar cultural show.

The authorities ordered that, in addition to organising and participating in the show, community members must wear traditional dress made from animal pelts. Many Tibetans stopped wearing animal pelts after an appeal by the Dalai Lama in 2006.

From top: China regularly stages highly choreographed Tibetan cultural events; A victim of the Nangchen beatings.

50 years of TAR marked with parades, bribes and threats

1 September marked the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) – a Chinese administrative area covering the western half of Tibet, including the capital, Lhasa. Although the region has little real autonomy and millions of Tibetans live outside it, Beijing marked the anniversary with a 14,000-word report on Tibet's "progress" and an extravagant parade in front of the Potala Palace featuring marching ranks of Chinese soldiers.

At the parade, senior Communist Party figure Yu Zhensheng said that the people of China were "steadfastly engaged in a struggle against separatism" and accused the Dalai Lama of "splittist and sabotage activities". Beijing also bestowed "gifts" on Tibetans in the TAR, varying from portraits of President Xi Jinping and Chairman Mao to electric tea-makers.



50th anniversary parade in Lhasa.

Political prisoner Runggye Adak released

After eight years in prison for publicly calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to his country, Tibetan nomad, Runggye Adak, was released on 31 July.

During a horse racing festival in 2007, Runggye Adak grabbed a microphone and said:

"If we cannot invite the Dalai Lama home, we will not have freedom of religion and happiness in Tibet."

In his speech he spoke of many of the grievances that Tibetans feel under Chinese rule. He also called for the release of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche (see p4) and the Panchen Lama (kidnapped as a boy by the Chinese government in 1995 and not seen since).



Runggye Adak speaking out at the festival.

...News update

Official tells Tibetans to self-immolate if they want to

A 1,000-strong crowd gathered in Tawu County to protest against comments by a senior local official after a self-immolation in the area on 20 May. The county's deputy governor, Gong Jiansheng, told a delegation requesting the release of people arrested following Tenzin Gyatso's fatal protest that they "could supply petrol to those who wanted to self-immolate." Ten locals had been arrested and beaten for attempting to prevent police from confiscating his body.

Three other Tibetans have set themselves alight since our last magazine. In May, 37-year-old Sangy Tso died in Chone County. Sonam Topgyal, 26, also ended his life in July in Derge County and Tashi Kyi died after self-immolating in Nagchu County on 27 August.



A sit-in protest in Tawu County.

Celebrations throughout Tibet for Dalai Lama's 80th birthday

Widespread celebrations were held throughout Tibet on 21 June as the Dalai Lama turned 80 according to the Tibetan lunar calendar. The spiritual leader's official birthday by the international Gregorian calendar is 6 July.

Signs of loyalty to the Dalai Lama are severely repressed in Tibet and displaying his image is banned. Despite these policies, his birthday was marked across Tibet, including in Lhasa. Images of celebrations were shared widely on social media and many appear to have been tolerated by the authorities.

In advance of the birthday, there was a tightening of security across Tibet. In Machu County, two Tibetans were arrested on 5 June accused of organising a horse racing competition to mark the spiritual leader's birthday. The event was banned and authorities threatened to arrest participants and spectators if it took place. Following the birthday, 20-year-old Tashi Kyi was arrested in Ngaba, apparently in connection with the birthday but the exact reasons are unknown.



A family in Amdo celebrates the Dalai Lama's birthday.

£1,000 could still be yours...

The final raffle deadline has been extended to **Monday 23 November** and the draw will take place on **Friday 27 November**. We apologise to those who were hoping to have won something already, but our goal is to raise money for our campaigning and awareness-raising work, so we want to do as much as possible to ensure all of the tickets are sold.

With a grand prize of £1,000, just ask yourself – what will you treat yourself to if you win?

- 1st Prize:** £1,000.
- 2nd Prize:** A bespoke experience in the Tibet hot-air balloon.
- 3rd Prize:** Two tickets to Latitude Festival 2016.
- 4th Prize:** A three-night weekend stay in the heart of the Cotswolds.
- 5th Prize:** An exclusive bottle of 21-year-old blended Scotch whisky.

Tickets are only £1 each, so please return completed stubs, or visit www.freetibet.org/raffle to enter the draw today!



A handshake for China, a cold shoulder for Tibet?



Serious concerns over Britain's position on Tibet.

The rise of China as a global power has become one of the gravest threats to international support for Tibet. Governments across the world have seen Chinese investment as key to recovering from recession – and been acutely conscious that being friends with China makes it very difficult to be a friend of Tibet.

We have previously reported how governments of countries such as the UK, South Africa and Norway have been unwilling to risk Beijing's ire by meeting the Dalai Lama, while senior US politicians remain willing to do so. A second measure of support for Tibet is willingness to challenge China's human rights abuses there.

“People despair”

Among major countries, the US has the most robust stance on Tibet. In comments this June regarding self-immolations, Sarah Sewall, the US Under Secretary of State for Human Rights and Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, strikingly said that “in the absence of peaceful avenues for the exercise of basic rights, people despair.” In August, another senior official told a press conference that human rights in Tibet were “absolutely a priority” for the US government in regard to China. Like all other governments, however, recent US administrations have not given their backing to self-determination for the Tibetan people.

In a debate on Tibet in the House of Commons in June, British Cabinet Minister

Hugo Swire was far less willing to challenge China. Saying that the relationship between China and the UK had “never been closer”, the minister even repeated language commonly used by Beijing that “investment in education, healthcare and employment has led to a doubling in life expectancy [in Tibet] since the early 1950s.”

On human rights, Mr Swire referred to “long-standing concerns” about religious freedom, freedom of expression and “ethnic minority rights”, but his only specific call for action was for political prisoners to have proper access to medical care. He called directly for the release of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche on medical parole (p4).

Weak response

Despite this call, when the Rinpoche died, the UK government made no public statement on the treatment of his body, his family or protesters, saying only that it was “saddened by his death”. Challenged by Free Tibet over its inexplicable failure to respond more strongly, we were told only that the situation was “worrying” and that the UK had “encouraged” and “supported” a slightly stronger EU statement calling for an investigation into the death.

Free Tibet is deeply concerned by what appears to be an ongoing weakening of the UK government's position on Tibet. President Xi Jinping is undertaking his first state visit to the UK in October and we will apply as much pressure as possible to ensure that Tibet is not brushed under the red carpet.

Above: Prime Minister David Cameron with Xi Jinping.

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