

## New ICT Report: “Has Life Here Always Been Like This?” Chinese Microbloggers Reveal Systematic Militarization in Tibet.



Militarization in Lhasa

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) released its latest report, “Has Life Here Always Been Like This?” Chinese Microbloggers Reveal Systematic Militarization in Tibet, on the eve of the 55<sup>th</sup> Tibetan National Uprising Day.

According to the report, Chinese travellers to Tibet are revealing the extent of the militarization and repression inside Tibet that the Chinese government is attempting to cover up through propaganda and censorship.

ICT collected hundreds of images and messages from the Chinese microblogging site Sina Weibo, which enabled use of the crowd-sourced perspective of Chinese tourists to document conditions inside Tibet.

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ICT'S ANALYSIS OF THESE MESSAGES FINDS THAT:

1. Chinese tourists have evidenced through social media the reality of the militarization and repressive measures that the government is implementing in Tibet and seeking to cover up through propaganda:
  - These Weibo observations are possible because Chinese travellers get access to Tibetan areas that are denied to foreign diplomats and journalists.
2. Use of social media demonstrates a double standard in Tibet: Chinese travellers posting Weibo messages on Tibet appear to be afforded greater leeway by the government, while Tibetans who pass on information about Tibet are considered suspect by the state; and
3. Chinese tourists find a reality in Tibet that differs sharply from expectations formed through official propaganda about Tibet:
  - Chinese tourists express confusion and at times fear over checkpoints and ID searches in Tibet;
  - Chinese tourists find their cell phone and internet service are turned off in Tibetan areas, revealing government efforts to block Tibetans' communication.

Chinese state-run media has sought to portray Tibet as idyllic and Tibetans as tranquil and grateful. To aid this narrative, Chinese authorities severely restrict access by foreigners to Tibetan areas. Foreign travellers have been forbidden to enter the Tibetan Autonomous Region since February, in an annual blackout to coincide with the 'sensitive' anniversaries in March, including March 10, the day Tibetans designate as their National Day to commemorate the flight of the **Dalai Lama**

into exile following the People's Liberation Army's attack on the Potala Palace in Lhasa.

As noted in the report, domestic tourists from Chinese areas of the PRC are not subject to the same travel restrictions. Thus, their postings on Weibo provide documentation of the reality in Tibet that diverges from the official narrative on Tibet.

To read the full report, please [click here](#).



Militarization in Lhasa

## European Parliament's Tibet Intergroup Hosts its 100<sup>th</sup> Meeting

On February 19, the offices of **MEP Thomas Mann** (Germany, EPP), the **International Campaign for Tibet (ICT)** and the **Office of Tibet in Brussels** jointly organized a special event to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **European Parliament's Tibet Intergroup**.

The **Dalai Lama** sent a message addressing the Intergroup's meeting, underlining how the future of Tibet should concern humanity at large, not only the Tibetan people. Ahead of Chinese President **Xi Jinping's** first official visit to Europe, the **Dalai Lama** also stressed that it is the international community's responsibility to work on resolving the Tibetan issue through a peaceful and constructive dialogue with China [see the message](#).

The event mixed politics, human rights and a rich cultural programme, including a Tibetan prayer and Tibetan dance and music performance. Besides **Thomas Mann**, who chaired the meeting, several MEPs, such as **Edith Bauer** (Slovakia, EPP), **Ryszard Czarnecki** (Poland, ECR), **Lidia Geringer De Oedenberg** (Poland, S&D), **Nathalie Griesbeck** (France, ALDE), **Eva Lichtenberger** (Austria, Greens), **Edward MacMillan-Scott** (UK, ALDE) and **Csaba Sogor** (Romania, EPP),

gave statements about their connection to Tibet and the importance of the European Parliament's Intergroup.

Mr. **Matteo Mecacci**, ICT's President, addressed the audience and formally launched ICT's campaign ahead of the European Parliament's elections, '2014 for Tibet' (<http://www.2014fortibet.eu>). He thanked the European Parliament and the Tibet Intergroup for its active support of the Tibetan cause for 25

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100<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EP's Tibet Intergroup, February 19, 2014 (From left to right: Mr. Kelsang Gyaltzen, Mr. Matteo Mecacci, MEP Thomas Mann, Mr. Thubten Wangchen, Dr. José Elías Esteve, and Mr. Alan Cantos)

years and pointed out the importance of the Intergroup's reestablishment after the European elections of May 2014. Mr **Mecacci** said: "It is very important for Europeans to identify causes with which we can unite as European citizens, in which we can reassert not only the importance of the Tibetan issue but also our own values, what we stand for."

Special Representative of the **Dalai Lama** in Europe, Mr. **Kelsang Gyaltzen** gave a statement in which he expressed his deep gratitude to the European Parliament for

its support for Tibet, and talked about the current political situation, drawing hope from the spirit of resilience of the Tibetan people.

Keynote speakers were Mr. **José Elías Esteve Moltó**, main research lawyer and author of the two ground-breaking lawsuits in Spain, Mr. **Alan Cantos** from Comité de Apoyo Al Tibet (CAT) in Madrid, Spain's Tibet Support Committee, which has pioneered the two cases, and Mr. **Thubten Wangchen**, Tibetan Parliamentarian and co-plaintiff. They

highlighted the fact that cases such as the Tibet lawsuits in Spain, culminated with orders of arrest being issued in Madrid for five former Chinese leaders, cannot be considered merely symbolic but that their significance – and the significance of universal jurisdiction as a whole – is about truth, redress for victims of human rights abuses and accountability. Quoting Council decision 2003/335/JHA on the investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes ([see also](#)), Mr. **Esteve** said that "international crimes must not go unpunished" and called upon members of the European Parliament to take action against and publicly voice their concern over the bill proposed by the Spanish government after direct Chinese pressure with the aim of reforming Spanish law on universal jurisdiction and substantially restrict its application.



Tibetan prayer, 100<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EP's Tibet Intergroup, February 19, 2014

## ICT's Campaign "2014 for Tibet" Launched



On February 19, **Matteo Mecacci**, President of the **International Campaign for Tibet (ICT)** announced the launch of ICT's European Parliament elections campaign "2014 for Tibet". The campaign invites current MEPs and candidates to sign a pledge and stand for the rights and freedoms of the people of Tibet in the 7<sup>th</sup> European Parliament, which is to be elected at the end of May.

"The main objective of this campaign is to have as many MEPs and candidates from democratic parties to support Tibet during the coming five years of their mandate," said **Matteo Mecacci**. "The pledge consists of a number of concrete promises, such

as supporting the reestablishment of the Tibet Intergroup."

Current president of the **Intergroup**, **MEP Thomas Mann** (Germany, EPP), emphasized the important

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role that it has played in keeping the Tibet issue on the European agenda. "The values on which the European Union is founded cannot be applied selectively and only when convenient," **Thomas Mann** remarked. "The manner, how we treat the Tibetan question, holds a mirror to the European Union and tells the world how serious we are about our own values."

Within the first weeks of the campaign a number of MEPs have already joined **Thomas Mann** signing the pledge: **Eva Lichtenberger** (Austria, Greens), **Kristiina Ojuland** (Estonia, ALDE), **Edward McMillan-Scott** (UK, ALDE), **Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg**

(Poland, S&D), **Csaba Sógor** (Romania, EPP), **Niccolò Rinaldi** (Italy, ALDE), **Leonidas Donskis** (Lithuania, ALDE), **Nathalie Griesbeck** (France, ALDE), **Ināki Irazabalbeitia Fernandez** (Spain, Greens), **Tunne Kelam** (Estonia, EPP) and **Bart Staes** (Belgium, Greens), among others

**ICT** has set up an online platform [www.2014fortibet.eu](http://www.2014fortibet.eu), which allows candidates from all the EU Member States to embark on the campaign and sign the pledge. **ICT's** EU Policy Director **Vincent Metten** pointed out the invaluable role that the **International Tibet Network** and **Tibet Support Groups** have played

in the campaign. "We are aiming to deliver the pledge to all the candidates in the mother tongue and friends of Tibet around Europe have been a great support translating it," said **Vincent Metten**.

The names of signatories will be communicated to members of Tibet Support Groups in the Member States before the elections. "The candidate's support to the Tibetan cause may become an important consideration, when supporters of Tibet are casting their votes at the end of May," **Vincent Metten** added.

The elections of the European Parliament will be taking place during the four-day election period from May 22 – 25, 2014. ■

## Demonstration in Brussels to Mark Tibet's Uprising Day Anniversary



10 March demonstration in Brussels

On March 10, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) jointly organized a demonstration with the Tibetan community in Belgium and the Tibetan Youth Congress to commemorate the 55th anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day.

The crowd gathered at Schuman Circle, in Brussels, holding speeches and chanting traditional Tibetan songs. Afterwards, Tibetans and Tibet supporters marched from the European External Action Service to the Chinese Embassy, calling upon the European Union and its Member States to engage China on the issue of Tibet and help resolve the longstanding Tibetan demand of a genuine and meaningful autonomy for its people.

This demonstration was of particular importance, as it took place three weeks ahead of Chinese President Xi Jinping's first official visit to Europe, including Brussels.

The program included speeches by Mr. **Ngodup Dorjee**, Representative of the **Dalai Lama** to the EU, who read out the message of Tibetan Prime Minister Dr. Lobsang Sangay on the occasion of the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day; Mr. **Thupten Phegyal**, President of the Tibetan community in Belgium; Mr. **Marco Reuter**, assistant of MEP **Thomas Mann**; and Ms. **Elena Gaita**, Policy and Advocacy Officer at **ICT Brussels**.

In her statement Ms. **Gaita** highlighted that the human rights situation in Tibet cannot be ignored by the EU institutions and called upon EU leaders to raise it during Chinese **President Xi Jinping's** first visit to Brussels. She insisted that discussions on human rights between the EU and China should not be confined to the human rights dialogue but should also be integrated into high-level meetings. "To do otherwise for a recent recipient of the Nobel Peace prize such as the EU, would be not only a mistake, but

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also an abdication of the values on which we have built our free societies. We believe that these values cannot be sidelined in the face of economic interests and trade relations," Ms. **Gaita** added.

On March 10, 1959 the Tibetans in Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet, rose up against the occupying Chinese forces and held a mass peace protest against Chinese invasion of Tibet and the tyranny that ensued it. Thousands of Tibetans were killed

and injured during the mass demonstrations and many more were incarcerated.

When the Chinese crackdown began, His Holiness the **Dalai Lama** had to flee Tibet to avoid any physical harm by the Chinese forces. Some eighty thousand Tibetans from all across Tibet followed him into exile in 1959 and the subsequent years to avoid Chinese repression. ■

## European Economic and Social Committee Visits Dharamsala for 10 March Celebrations



Dalai Lama with EESC delegation in Dharamsala and ICT's EU Policy Director Vincent Metten (last on the right)

The European Economic and Social Committee's (EESC) President, **Henri Malosse**, was a special guest and speaker at the ceremony of the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tibet uprising that took place on March 10 in Dharamsala (India). As the only president of an EU institution to visit the government of Tibet in exile, he wanted to pay tribute to the victims of the repression in Tibet and through them to all the people deprived of liberty in China and everywhere in the world.

"The Tibet question is universal", said **Henri Malosse** from the stage, "it is a question of liberty, democracy and solidarity, which are the values at the foundation of the European Union". As such, Europe has these values as a legacy and must defend them everywhere they are in danger in order to find a sustainable solution.

EU Policy Director at the **International Campaign for Tibet** (ICT) in Brussels, **Vincent Metten**, was in Dharamsala accompanying the EESC delegation. Mr. **Metten** said:

"The first ever participation of a President of an EU Institution at the commemoration of the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tibetan uprising here in Dharamsala creates a precedent that will hopefully be followed by other top EU leaders. **EESC President Henri Malosse** today expressed publicly his support and solidarity for the Tibetan people and the Middle Way Approach. His statement sends a clear political message to Chinese leaders that the EU's foreign policy is based on core values of democracy, rule of law, universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, principles of equality and solidarity and respect for the principles of the UN Charter and International Law". On the following day, the **EESC** delegation met with the **Dalai Lama**.

During this meeting, the **Dalai Lama** stated that the "Middle Way Approach" does not mean a claim for independence but actually a genuine autonomy for Tibet. He explained that with China, the economic development of Tibet could grow rapidly. However, it is necessary that the Tibetans themselves handle education, the environment and religion.

The **Dalai Lama** also asked the **President Malosse** to transmit to **Xi Jinping** a message of peace in the resolution of the Tibetan question during his forthcoming visit to Brussels. ■

## Spanish Parliament Split over Legal Reform to Limit Universal Jurisdiction Law After Chinese Pressure

On February 11 the Spanish Parliament voted to move ahead with a bill limiting the power of the judiciary to investigate human rights abuses committed outside the country and substantially restricting the application of the principle of universal jurisdiction.



From left to right: Mr. Alan Cantos, Mr. Thubten Wangchen, Mr. Palden Gyatso (witness in the cases following 33 years in prisons and labour camps in Tibet) and Dr. José Elias Esteve.

This development follows pressure from the Chinese authorities on Madrid over two lawsuits focusing on China's leadership for its policies in Tibet, and which has led to arrest warrants being issued by the Spanish courts for several Chinese officials (see edition 40 and 41 of the Tibet Brief of November 2013 and January 2014).

The result of the vote by the Spanish Parliament underlines the unprecedented pressure that the Chinese government is imposing on European governments. This is part of an increasing attempt by China to undermine the rules and principles of international law in order to preserve its impunity. The new and very alarming element is that now, China, an authoritarian government, is able to directly request, and obtain, changes to the national legislation of a major European democracy such as Spain.

The principle of universal jurisdiction

allows national courts to try cases of the most serious crimes, including war crimes, torture, enforced disappearance, regardless of where they were committed and the nationality of the perpetrator and/or the victim. The consensus of the international community is very clear: these crimes shock the conscience of humanity and must be punished, and it is the duty of all states to investigate and prosecute those responsible for these crimes.

Spain has had a leading role in enforcing international justice since universal jurisdiction was adopted into national law in 1985.

However, the bill proposed by the People's Party (Partido Popular) would de facto close the doors of Spanish courts to the victims of grave human rights violations who are unlikely otherwise to be able to obtain justice, particularly within their own jurisdictions.

The new bill would put Spain in breach of its international obligations and offer the prospect of impunity to many responsible for serious crimes. It would damage Spain's international reputation and make it an outlier in European Union Member States' common fight against impunity for international crimes (for more legal details on the proposed bill, please read a joint NGO statement, signed by 122 organisations, including ICT, available at: [click here](#))

As the People's Party has an absolute majority in the Spanish Parliament, the result of the vote had already been anticipated. The next stage is for the bill to go to the Spanish Senate, which is expected in a matter of weeks.

An opportunity to block the bill exists by launching an appeal to the Spanish Constitutional Court to declare the illegality of this proposed reform to the law on the following basis:

- The reforms proposed are contrary to international law and to Spain's constitution, specifically Article 96;
- The draft bill applies not only to future investigations but also to current investigations, meaning that all current cases in Spain on the basis of universal jurisdiction will be closed until it can be proven that they comply with the new requirements. This could go against the principle of separation of powers in a democracy, as it goes beyond the legislative authority of Parliament by summarily closing all the investigations. Any decision to close a case should be taken by the

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## UN Human Rights Council Adopts China's UPR Working Group Report Amid Chinese Attempts to Block the Council's Work

On October 22, 2013 China underwent its second Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). On that occasion, seven UN Member States – namely Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United States – made formal recommendations to China on human rights in Tibet (for more detailed information on the UPR session, see edition 40 of the Tibet Brief – November 2013).



FIDH delivering a joint statement with ICT and HRiC at the UN Human Rights Council

During its 25<sup>th</sup> session (March 3 – 28, 2014) the HRC adopted the final UPR Working Group Report on China.

**The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT)** planned an advocacy and media strategy ahead of the adoption of China's report. It sent letters to the governments, which spoke up for Tibet at China's formal UPR session, urging them to call upon China to accept recommendations on Tibet and improve its human rights situation.

**ICT** also prepared an online petition targeting the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay to raise Tibet in her opening statement at the HRC session. Over 5000 Tibet supporters from all over the world signed the appeal

to Ms. **Pillay**.

However, China responded to the review of its human rights record by rejecting most recommendations made specifically on Tibet. Out of the seven recommendations mentioning Tibet, China accepted only one. It rejected five, and said it had already implemented another. China accepted the recommendation by Switzerland asking to facilitate the visits of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Special Rapporteurs to Tibet.

China also said that the United States' recommendation to protect the rights of ethnic minority groups – including Tibetans, Uighurs, and Mongolians – in

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courts on a case-by-case basis; and

- The proposed bill violates several key international treaties ratified by Spain, such as the Geneva Conventions of 1949 or the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which all enshrine the principle of "prosecute or extradite".

This appeal needs to be signed by at least 50 members of the Spanish Parliament.

**The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT)** is actively collaborating with **Comité de Apoyo al Tibet (CAT)** and **Dr. José Elias Esteve**, the Spanish Tibet Support Group and the lawyer behind the successful Tibet lawsuit in Spain.

**ICT Brussels** sent letters to all Spanish MEPs from the Socialist Group in the EP, the Chair of the EP's Socialist Group and the President of the Socialist International in order to call upon them to take urgent action to challenge the legality of the proposed bill before the Spanish Constitutional Court, which would be the only means to prevent the bill from becoming official law in Spain.

Thanks to the prompt action undertaken by **ICT** and many other civil society organisations, on March 4 the Spanish Socialist spokesperson, Ms. **Soraya Rodriguez**, announced in Madrid that the opposition Socialist Party would submit an appeal to the Constitutional Court against the bill (for more information, please read El País report in Spanish at: [click here](#)).

**ICT** highly welcomed the announcement. **ICT's President, Mr. Matteo Mecacci**, said: "The decision by the Spanish socialists confirms that in a democracy, checks and balances can be brought to bear on rushed and abrupt moves, such as that of the Spanish government in changing universal jurisdiction legislation under pressure from an authoritarian government." ■

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accordance with China's Constitution and international human rights commitments the protestis already being implemented and was, therefore, accepted.

The seven recommendations on Tibet and China's responses thereto can be found [here](#).

What happened at the formal adoption of China's report has been unprecedented in the HRC's work. In dramatic exchanges and parliamentary procedural manoeuvres rarely seen in the Council, member states and NGOs sought a minute of silence for Ms. **Cao Shunli**, a Chinese human rights defender who was prevented by the government from participating in China's human rights review, and then died in detention on March 14 after being denied medical treatment.

Consideration of China's UPR report was delayed by a day after China tried to stop civil society organizations from holding a minute of silence to honor Ms. Cao.

Even on the very day of the adoption of its UPR report (March 20), China attempted to block this action by raising several points of order. This resulted in a long debate between a high number of UN member states as well as the vote on the President's ruling. The President's ruling that this measure should be decided by

the bureau was defeated. Afterward the President of the HRC allowed the NGOs to continue with their statements. Despite continued Chinese obstructions, the case of Cao Shunli was mentioned by many member states, and NGOs stood and held pictures of the deceased human rights defender in the back of the council chamber.

As the **International Federation for Human Rights** (FIDH) delivered an oral statement at the Council ([see UN webcast at 01:33:29](#)), supported in its critic of China's report by its two member organizations **ICT** and **Human Rights in China** (HRiC), the Chinese delegation interrupted the presenter by raising a point of order. The Chinese asked the President of the Council "to abolish the status of the speaker [FIDH] to speak" because the other two organizations did not have consultative status. The UN secretariat ruled against the Chinese, citing a long practice where NGOs accredited to **ECOSOC** could "mention other entities." FIDH was allowed to continue with the statement.

The statement [by FIDH, ICT and HRiC](#) denounced the widespread harassment and threats against human rights defenders and urged China to free all those arbitrarily detained, including Tibetan abbot Khenpo Kartse.

Chinese harassment inside the Council included acts of non-verbal intimidation and harassment towards representatives of NGOs attending the session. Chinese representatives filmed and took pictures of them in contravention of the Council's rules.

Earlier in the week, China interrupted testimony at the Council by the daughter of political prisoner Wang Bingzhang. Ms. **Wang** was able to continue her statement after several UN member states spoke up on her behalf, underlining the importance of freedom of expression.

At the end of the session, the [Council adopted the UPR Working Group Report](#). Similarly to what happened during its first UPR in 2009, [China rejected most human rights recommendations on Tibet](#).

The United States delegation called for the release of Tibetan political prisoner **Dhondup Wangchen** and said they were deeply concerned by government policies that have contributed to unrest in Uyghur, Tibetan and Mongolian areas of China. The [United Kingdom](#) and the [U.S. released statements](#) two days before condemning increased arrests, forced disappearances, extralegal detentions in China and the ongoing restrictions on religious, cultural and language rights in Xinjiang and Tibet. ■

## President Xi Jinping's tour of Europe marked by protests

Activists were gathering on 31 March in Brussels for a demonstration demanding human rights in the People's Republic of China (PRC) – one of a number of protests that marked the first visit of **Chinese President Xi Jinping** to Europe.

European citizens, human rights activists, members of the Tibetan and Uyghur communities, Chinese activists, and Falun Gong practitioners were demonstrating in front of the European Parliament to voice their concerns about the human rights situation in China, Xinjiang and Tibet.

The protest coincided with **President Xi Jinping's** meetings with the European leaders **Herman Van Rompuy**, **José Manuel Barroso** and **Martin Schulz** as well as with the King of the Belgians and members of the Belgian government.

The **EU Policy Director of International Campaign for Tibet** (ICT) **Vincent**

**Metten** pointed out that **Xi Jinping's** presidency has so far failed to bring about any significant change from his predecessors' policy on Tibet. "On the contrary, president Xi has presided over a more systematic and deepening crackdown in Tibet and a deteriorating human rights

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Tibetan demonstrators in front of the European Parliament, March 31, 2014, Brussels

environment across the PRC," **Vincent Metten** remarked. "Those concerns must be addressed by the European leaders, when meeting **president Xi**."

**Henri Malosse**, President of the European Economic and Social Committee, who spoke at the meeting, emphasized the importance of raising the issue of human rights with China. "**President Xi Jinping** paid a visit yesterday to the pandas in

Belgium, but there is something much more important – human beings in China, who suffer from the lack of basic human rights," said **Henri Malosse**.

The list of speakers at the demonstration included **Tunne Kelam**, MEP (Estonia); **Georges Dallemagne**, MP (Belgium) as well as representatives of Chinese, Tibetan and Uyghur communities in Belgium.

Many protesters, both men and women, had their hair shaven at the meeting as a show of solidarity with the 130 Tibetans, who have self-immolated since February 2009.

The demonstration was jointly organised by the **International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)**, **International Campaign for Tibet (ICT)**, **Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO)**, the **Tibetan Community in Belgium** and the **Tibetan Youth Congress**.

**President Xi Jinping's** visit was accompanied by similar protests in Amsterdam, Berlin and Paris as well as in Bruges, where he delivered a speech on April 1 at the College of Europe.

In Bruges the police arrested a dozen Tibetans and human rights activists, including the President of *Vrienden van Tibet* Inge Hermans as they were heading to the sanctioned protest. The police also entered a private home on the City Hall square to confiscate a Tibetan flag, which was on the route of **President Xi Jinping's** cortege. ■

## New Regulations in Tibet to Criminalize Self-Immolations by Targeting Families, Villagers and Monasteries

Harsher and unprecedented measures to criminalize self-immolation have been imposed in Tibet over the past year. This demonstrates a more systematic response by the authorities to recast the self-immolations as criminal acts and attribute blame for the self-immolations to 'outside forces.'

County-level authorities in Dzoegé (Chinese: Ruo'ergai), Ngaba (Chinese: Aba), have issued harsh new rulings that threaten to penalize villagers, monks and others in the area if a self-immolation occurs. The measures state that family, fellow villagers, and monasteries could be subject to punishment and persecution if a Tibetan self-immolator is a relative or from the local area, with potentially devastating consequences on the broader community.

The regulations include more severe tactics in an attempt to prevent self-immolations or other forms of protest, although evidence suggests that self-immolations by Tibetans are a solitary act, without inducement from others.

The 16-point document was issued in Tibetan and Chinese on April 8, 2013 by Dzoegé county government in Ngaba, Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan (the Tibetan area of Amdo), but has only just been received

by Tibetans in exile due to a deepening crackdown in the area including more systematic measures to block information flow.

While it is unprecedented that such measures are detailed in writing, numerous threats similar to these rulings have been made to families and friends of those who have self-immolated in other areas, such as Ngaba county.

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The rulings state the following:

- Families and relatives of Tibetans who self-immolate will not be able to hold government positions or receive official aid;
- Those who survived self-immolations and their family members will lose household registration benefits;
- Villages where the self-immolation protests occur will be completely deprived of government assistance, and farmland or pasture registered in the name of the self-immolator taken by the authorities;
- Monasteries where self-immolations occur will have to pay a penalty of between 10,000 to 500,000 yuan

(approximately 1,100 Euro to 60,000 Euro);

- Large rewards are offered to those who provide information on people who may be planning to self-immolate, or those that have occurred.

The measures announced in Dzoegé are a new development in an increasingly aggressive drive to criminalize self-immolations. This has resulted in the imposition of long prison sentences for those singled out by the authorities for blame, including monks who have led prayers for those who died, or friends and relatives of those who have self-immolated. They are evidence of the authorities' failure to prevent self-

immolations, and the concern of Tibetan local officials about their relationship with the central government as a result.

Regional and local officials also know that strong and harshly worded statements about the need to improve 'stability maintenance' (Chinese: *weiwén*) are a way of obtaining increased resources from the central authorities. In Chinese political language, 'stability' is a coded reference to the need to prevent any form of 'social disorder.' In Tibetan areas of the PRC, 'stability maintenance' has effectively been carried out on a war footing. ■

## President Obama Meets with the Dalai Lama

On February 21 the Dalai Lama met U.S. President Barack Obama at the White House. During the meeting, President Obama expressed his deep concern about the worsening human rights situation in Tibet, and reiterated his support for the preservation of the unique religious, cultural, and linguistic traditions of Tibet. It was the third meeting during President Obama's presidency, and fourth time overall.



Dalai Lama and U.S. President Barack Obama in the White House, February 21, 2014

*preservation of Tibet's unique heritage is reflected both through this meeting and through its Tibet policy and programs. ICT will continue to work at the global level to strengthen the political support for the Tibetan cause, while China increases its pressure and influence on democratic governments worldwide."*

While the **Dalai Lama** has formally relinquished his political duties in the Central Tibetan Administration, he has said he will continue his responsibility to advocate for his people. He has stated that, as he continues a busy travel schedule to cities around the world, his visits to Washington, DC, and Brussels are political in nature.

**Matteo Mecacci**, President of the **International Campaign for Tibet** (ICT), said: "This meeting affirms the long-standing friendship and respect of the United States toward His Holiness, his message, and his cause. American policy-makers understand that the stability Chinese leaders seek will not be fulfilled without a solution on Tibet. The steadfast U.S. support for dialogue and

The **Dalai Lama's** visits to the White House, which began in 1991 and encompass meetings with four U.S. Presidents, are both a reflection and result of the base of support that the American public has for the **Dalai Lama** and his messages of universal peace and justice. **ICT** will continue to call on our supporters worldwide to help amplify Tibetan voices. ■

## Political prisoners focus

### Phagmo Samdup's family members

Five people, including family members, were detained in February 2014 following the self-immolation and death of Phagmo Samdup, a father of two in his late twenties, on February 5 in Tsekhog (Chinese: Zeku) in Malho (Chinese: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, the Tibetan area of Amdo.



Phagmo Samdup with his family

Four of the detainees have been identified as **Gyatso**, **Phagmo Samdup's** younger brother, **Paldor** and his wife, **Pema**, and **Tseten Gyal**. All of the detainees are from the same village in Dokarmo. Four of them were released following interrogation at the local detention center, but **Tseten Gyal** is believed to be still in detention, according to Tibetan exile sources.

Tight security has been imposed in the area, with armed police stationed outside his family home. **Phagmo Samdup's** family were not allowed to invite any monks to carry out traditional prayers for his death, and local officials warned them that if they did so, the monastery would be shut down and individuals arrested, according to the same sources. ■

## This number's video suggestion



### ICT's Tibetan Youth Leadership Program video online

The **International Campaign for Tibet (ICT)** launched its new video on the **Tibetan Youth Leadership Program (TYLP)** it organised in Brussels in November 2013.

From November 12 – 14, 2013, **ICT** held a capacity-building program in Brussels with ten Tibetan students residing and studying in 5 different European countries (Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom).

**ICT's** TYLP in Brussels aimed at training Tibetan students to become effective leaders within their respective Tibetan communities in Europe and become advocates of the Tibetan cause at the EU level, providing them with a meaningful exposure to the EU political scene and the discourse around EU-China relations and Tibet's role in it. During the program, participants were able to expand their understanding of the role of activists, lobbyists, NGOs and the media in influencing EU foreign policy in Brussels.

The program also included visits to EU institutions, such as the **European Parliament (EP)** and the **European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)**, as well as meetings with EU officials.

[Click here](#) for the full 10-minute long documentary, featuring interviews with the Tibetan students, European policy-makers, **ICT** staff and experts on Tibet. ■

## Upcoming Events

- ▶ **MAY 8, 2014:** CHINA'S REVIEW BY THE UN COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS
- ▶ **MAY – JUNE 2014:** DALAI LAMA'S VISIT TO EUROPE (LATVIA, NORWAY, THE NETHERLANDS, GERMANY AND ITALY)
- ▶ **MAY 22 – 25:** EU ELECTIONS