

OUTSIDE TIBET:

ICT Report: Tibetans vote for new leader, elections throughout Diaspora: On March 20, 2011, Tibetans across the diaspora voted for the new Kalon Tripa, the Chairman of the Cabinet, who will head the Tibetan administration in exile, as well as 44 members of the Tibetan Parliament in exile. More than 82,000 Tibetans have registered to vote. Mary Beth Markey, President of ICT, said, "The March 20 Tibetan Election ... is a historic one. These elected representatives will likely be faced with the full responsibility of governing as the Dalai Lama seeks to give up his last remaining governmental roles. The new Tibetan government will be a significant step forward in a long reform process envisioned by the Dalai Lama in Tibet and realized in exile." <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-press-releases/tibetans-vote-new-leader-elections-throughout-diaspora>

INSIDE TIBET:

ICT Report: Amidst heavy security presence, thousands of Tibetans attend funeral of monk who set fire to himself in Ngaba: A Tibetan monk, Phuntsog, who set himself on fire in Ngaba on March 16, was cremated on March 18, in an emotional ceremony attended by thousands of monks. Sources said that the monks laid khatags (traditional white blessing scarves) on Phuntsog's body, and vast crowds of monks and lay people gathered, wanting to show their respect for this young monk's sacrifice for his country and freedom. Phuntsog's self immolation was followed by peaceful protests and detentions. While the total number of Tibetans in detention is not known, seven monks were released on March 17 and Tsering Kyi, a mother with two young children, was released on March 18, after being severely beaten. On March 17, Chinese media issued a second official statement about Phuntsog's death, suggesting that monks had delayed Phuntsog's hospital treatment and that he had died from serious burns. <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/amidst-heavy-security-presence-thousands-tibetans-attend-funeral-monk-who-set-fire-himself>

ICT Report: Chinese authorities confirm death of monk after self-immolation; military crackdown at Kirti: On March 17, a Chinese government spokesman confirmed Phuntsog's death. Phuntsog's protest marked the third anniversary of a major protest and crackdown in Kirti Monastery in 2008, during which at least 10 Tibetan were shot dead. During his protest, Phuntsog was heard to shout slogans for the long life of the Dalai Lama. Police and security personnel who extinguished the flames, were observed beating Phuntsog. Tibetans present at the scene intervened and managed to take Phuntsog back to Kirti monastery. Immediately after, authorities sought to impose an information blackout in the area, but details of events following continue to emerge. This is the second self-immolation by a Kirti monk in recent years. In February, 2009, Tapey, a monk in his mid-twenties, set himself on fire in protest of local authorities objection to monks' observance Monlam, a traditional prayer festival. Sources then said that police opened fire on Tapey but official Chinese press that reported the incident, denied that police had opened fire. Tapey survived, but was taken into custody and his whereabouts remain unknown. <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/chinese-authorities-confirm-death-monk-after-self-immolation-military-crackdown-kirti>

U.S. GOVERNMENT:

Members of Congress respond to the Dalai Lama's March 10 statement: US Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin and Senator Dianne Feinstein, presented the Dalai Lama's March 10 statement into the congressional record of the House of Representatives and the US Senate on March 16 and 17, respectively. Their full statement is available in the congressional records at <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin said, "I strongly believe that the United States has a responsibility to stand up for human rights and the rule of law, and I support efforts to address the plight of Tibetans. At a time when despots around the world cling to power as their people yearn for democracy, the Dalai Lama's willful ceding of power is a tribute to his vision to fulfill the aspirations of the Tibetan people and should inspire others around the world."

Senator Dianne Feinstein applauded His Holiness's decision to hand over his formal authority to an elected leader but also said that she took comfort in the knowledge that His Holiness will continue his role as spiritual leader to the Tibetan people and continue to work to preserve Tibetan culture inside and outside Tibet. In particular, she supported His Holiness' call for fact-finding delegations to Tibet, including representatives of international parliamentarians, to see for themselves the current situation on the ground. She said, "I urge the administration to support fact-finding delegations to Tibet and work with our friends and allies in the international community to call on the Chinese Government to begin substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama on national reconciliation, respect for Tibetan culture, and meaningful autonomy for Tibet."