

International Advocacy for Tibet

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His Holiness the Dalai Lama delivers remarks in the Rotunda of the US Capitol upon receiving the US Congressional Gold Medal.

THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET PROUDLY CELEBRATED ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2008. For more than two decades, ICT has called the world's attention to the injustices and brutality suffered by the Tibetan people. With offices in Washington, D.C., Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels and capacity in London, ICT's advocacy work reaches international audiences, gaining support for Tibet in national capitals and governmental bodies. Central to the mission of ICT's advocacy is support for Tibetan self-determination, embodied in His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach. In addition, ICT works to promote fundamental human rights for Tibetans, sustainability in economic development, an end to degradation and the renewal of Tibet's natural resources and environment, the protection of Tibetan refugees, and the revitalization of long-staying Tibetan refugee communities.

ICT supports the legitimacy of the Tibetan exile government and the Dalai Lama as leader of the Tibetan people. ICT believes that the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach to reaching a political solution for Tibet is the best hope of the Chinese government for peace and stability in Tibet. In February 2010, United States President Barack Obama met with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and issued a statement affirming U.S. support for the Middle Way Approach (full text available: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/statement-press-secretary-presidents-meeting-with-his-holiness-xiv-dalai-lama>). Pursuant to the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, the U.S. State Department has annually reported on the status of Sino-Tibetan negotiations to the Congress (full text: <http://www.savetibet.org/policy-center/tibetan-policy-act>). In October 2007, the U.S. Congress awarded His Holiness the Dalai Lama the highest civilian honor, the Congressional

Gold Medal for his commitment to nonviolence and dialogue, presented by then President George W. Bush (for more information: <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/congressional-gold-medal-ceremony-transcripts-speeches-and-webcast>). These and numerous other actions, supported by ICT advocacy, send a clear message to Tibetans in Tibet and Chinese leadership that the United States stands committed to the Middle Way and in support of the Dalai Lama.

Internationally, ICT offices work closely with Members of the European Parliament who have joined together in the EP Tibet Intergroup to advocate for Tibet. Pressing for unified action and a unified EP position on Tibet, ICT in Europe is a resource for information on the complex political and human rights situation in Tibet. ICT has supported the Tibetan parliament in exile in hosting the World Parliamentarians Conferences for Tibet, engaging representatives of democratic governments around the world to support Tibetans and help achieve a political solution for Tibet. (For more information please visit: <http://www.savetibet.org/policy-center/european-international-actions/international-parliamentary-support-tibet>.)

As a credible advocate, ICT provides testimony to governments and governmental bodies, including the US Congress and national parliamentary bodies, the European Parliament, and the United Nations. Working to provide world leaders with the facts about the reality in Tibet, ICT encourages multilateral action to engage Chinese leaders to end their human rights abuses and to peacefully engage with Tibet's legitimate representatives.

With field offices in India and Nepal as well as a strong network of Tibetans inside Tibet and in exile, ICT is able to provide up-to-date reporting on Tibet, including issues related to Tibetan refugees. This output informs governments and institutions in their engagement with the Chinese government. During the March 2008 demonstrations in Tibet, government leaders turned to ICT for information as events unfolded in Tibet, often responding to ICT members around the world who were calling for governmental protest against China's harsh reaction to peaceful demonstrations.

ICT maintains an extensive list of Tibetan political prisoners, the charges against them, and their sentences—a source which features prominently in ICT government advocacy. Working with governments and world leaders on behalf of individual Tibetan political prisoners, ICT supports gov-

ernment advocacy on behalf of these political prisoners during meetings with Chinese officials (visit ICT's Political Prisoner Action Page: <http://www.missingvoices.net/>). In 2003, following a concerted government lobbying effort by ICT and human rights advocacy groups, the Chinese government released Ngawang Sangdrol after she had served 11 years of a 21 year sentence for peaceful protest—the longest sentence received by a female political prisoner in Tibet. (See: <http://www.savetibet.org/action-center/ngawang-sangdrol>.)

ICT also works with Tibetans to identify needs and to secure financial support from governments for development programs in Tibet. Annually, funding from U.S., European and other sources goes towards development, cultural and educational programs that support local Tibetans inside Tibet and protect the Tibetan identity.

Tibetans in exile also benefit from ICT's advocacy work. ICT secures millions of dollars in government support for new and long-staying refugees in India and Nepal, and ICT works to further initiatives large and small that have the potential to positively impact Tibetans. From the Tibetan refugee transit center in Kathmandu, the Tibetan Childrens' Village Schools, scores of clinics and small private projects, to Voice of America and emigration visas, and on and on, ICT has made a contribution that endures.

ICT's advocacy revolves around the persistence and creativity of committed parliamentarians from around the world. If you would like to know more about or be a part of ICT's advocacy efforts, please contact your nearest ICT office. If you live in the United States, join ICT in March for its annual Tibet Lobby Day, during which Tibetan-Americans and Tibet supporters converge on Capitol Hill to meet their elected representatives and share their hopes for Tibet.