

Dalai Lama visits Europe, calls to engage in 'constructive criticism' of China



The Dalai Lama with Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament, in Brussels on 15 September 2016. Photo © European Parliament

The Dalai Lama called on Europe to engage in 'constructive criticism' of China at the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 15 September, following high-profile visits to Paris and Brussels. He then travelled to Poland, Latvia, Switzerland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Italy, where he gave a series of teachings and participated in several public events.

Despite Chinese pressure to cancel the meetings, the Dalai Lama held discussions with European Parliament President Martin Schulz and members

of the Foreign Affairs Committee. On his fifth visit to the European Parliament, His Holiness said that the EU should give "constructive criticism" to China.

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7th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups held in Brussels

On 8 September, the Dalai Lama attended the inaugural ceremony of the 7th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups, which took place in Brussels from 8-10 September.



Some of the 250-plus delegates attending the 7th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups in Brussels.
Photo: FreeTibet

Convened in Saint-Louis University by the European Parliament's Tibet Interest Group and co-hosted by the International Campaign for Tibet, Lights on Tibet, les Amis du Tibet and the Tibetan Community in Belgium, the three-day conference gathered over 250 delegates representing Tibet support groups from 50 countries, as well as Chinese lawyers, scholars and human rights activists. Together, they examined the current situation in occupied Tibet, especially from the political, human rights and environmental perspectives, and drew up plans for coordinated action.

Other speakers at the inaugural session included the Prime Minister of the Tibetan government in exile Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, members of the European Parliament Thomas Mann and Cristian Dan Preda, Speaker of the Flemish Parliament Jan Peumans – who Chinese officials unsuccessfully tried to prevent attending – as well as former President of the European Economic and Social Committee Henri Malosse, and ICT Chairman Richard Gere.

The Statement of the 7th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups is available [here](#). ■

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"There is hope and I think it is important that the outside world, particularly like the EU, I think with sincere motivation to in order to help People's Republic of China with some sort of constructive criticism, is sometimes necessary," he said. The Tibetan spiritual leader also shared his views on various topics including self-immolations, the Sino-Tibetan dialogue and the environment, and expressed his admiration for the spirit of the European Union because it worked for the common interest of the people.

While in Strasbourg, the Dalai Lama also visited the Council of Europe, where he met the Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly Pedro Agramunt and Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks. The Dalai Lama delivered an [address](#) at the *Palais de l'Europe* to the diplomatic community and representatives of Council of Europe bodies. He expressed his belief that moral education based on what he called "universal values" was the key to achieving greater compassion in the world.

The Dalai Lama then continued his October tour of Europe with various teachings and public events in several countries such as Latvia, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, where he held a public talk entitled "Secular Ethics" on 19 October at the [20th Forum 2000 Conference](#). ■

Tibet once again in the spotlight at the 33rd Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

The 33rd session of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations in Geneva once again saw Tibet and China in the spotlight, as High Commissioner for Human Rights Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al-Hussein [expressed concern](#) with regard to human rights violations in the People's Republic of China and urged the Chinese government to cooperate with United Nations institutions.



Tibetans and Uyghurs walking hand-in-hand in Geneva on 16 September to call for freedom of religion in China. Photo: ICT

During the general debate, Slovakia on behalf of the European Union and Germany highlighted the situation in Tibet, while other countries, such as the United States, the Czech Republic, France, Canada, Ireland and the UK, expressed concern about the overall human rights situation in China. ICT, on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, delivered an [oral statement](#) on the state of religious freedom in Tibet. While urging the Chinese government to respect the rights of worshippers, particularly at the important Buddhist institution of Larung Gar, the statement called on the Chinese government to allow

unfettered access to Tibet and Buddhist institutions - like Larung Gar.

The human rights situation in Tibet was further raised at a side event to the ongoing session of the Human Rights Council, organised by the Society for Threatened People and moderated by ICT's Kai Mueller. Speaking at the event, Nyima Lhamo, niece of the late monk Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, gave her account of the events that followed her uncle's death and shared her family's belief that the revered monk had not died from natural causes while in prison. "In Tibet there are many political prisoners suffering the same fate as

my uncle Tenzin Delek Rinpoche. So I sincerely hope that their voices be heard and they receive justice. I believe it is important for the world to know about the injustices suffered by Tibetans in Tibet," she said.

Earlier in September, at a "Tibet solidarity rally" co-organised by ICT in front of the Palais des Nations, around 2000 Tibetans, Uyghurs and their supporters also jointly urged for religious freedom in China. Prominent speakers included civil society activists, parliamentarians, former political prisoners and politicians, who called on the international community to raise human rights violations with the Chinese government. ■



Tibetans and Uyghurs gathered in front of the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 16 September to urge for freedom of religion in China. Photo: ICT

Mass expulsions at globally renowned Buddhist institutes follow demolitions

News has emerged of mass expulsions of religious practitioners from two major religious sites in eastern Tibet, Larung Gar and Yachen Gar.

A large number of Tibetan religious practitioners have been forced to leave Larung Gar in Serthar (Chinese: Seda), in Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan (the Tibetan area of Kham), following the demolition of their homes that began in July at the prominent Tibetan Buddhist institute. The exact number is unknown due to tight security restrictions in the area, with communications blocked to prevent information reaching the outside world. *"It is believed the authorities plan to prevent people staying there permanently in future, unless they are from the immediate local area,"* said a Tibetan source. [Video footage](#) circulating on social media shows emotional scenes of nuns weeping as they leave Larung Gar

on a coach, with others sobbing as they remain, some covering their face with their robes in anguish.

Several hundred homes were destroyed at Larung Gar in the first week of demolitions in July, and since then hundreds more, with government workers destroying around 2,000 dwellings in recent weeks. Although Tibetan sources stated that compensation was promised by the local authorities to those who had lost their homes, none has yet materialised according to the same sources. Reports received by ICT say the demolitions, which are believed to have led to the suicide of three nuns since July, have now stopped, although they are likely to resume next year if not before.

In September, Human Rights Watch also [reported](#) that since April 2016, up to a thousand nuns from the TAR studying at another major monastic encampment about 300 kilometers southwest of Larung Gar, have been forced to leave the institution and return to their homes. Although more than 800 dwellings were destroyed there in 2001, with nuns even being forced to carry out the destruction themselves, Yachen Garn, which has an estimated 10,000 residents, mostly nuns, has not experienced major demolitions in recent months. The nuns are unlikely to be allowed to attend nunneries in their home areas in the TAR, given restrictions there. ■

New Party boss in Tibet Autonomous Region associated with hardline campaigns, anti-Dalai Lama struggle

A new Communist Party chief has taken over in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), using his first statement to underline the importance of the political 'struggle' against the Dalai Lama.



Wu Yingjie, new Communist Party Secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

In his first statement as Party Secretary, Wu Yingjie – a former propaganda official – emphasized the key importance of a deepened 'struggle' against the Dalai Lama, using retrograde political language that states authorities must *"expand positive propaganda, and expose and denigrate the Dalai"*. Wu's appointment and the tone of his speech indicates a continued tough approach to the region.

As Commander of the 'Stability Maintenance Corps' (based on Xi Jinping's focus on 'long-term stability' – in other words the eradication of dissent and enforcement of compliance to Party policies), Wu Yingjie was particularly associated with the harsh and violent crackdown in Nagchu (Chinese: Naqu) prefecture in the TAR, following the refusal of villagers in Driru (Chinese: Biru) to display Chinese national flags in

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October 2014. This sweeping crackdown saw police firing into unarmed crowds. Tibetans have also died under torture, including a senior monk who was beaten to death, and the arrest and imprisonment of hundreds of Tibetans.

Unusually for a TAR Party Secretary,

Wu Yingjie has spent virtually his entire career in Tibet, beginning in the last years of the Cultural Revolution on a farm in Nyingtri (Chinese: Linzhi). He has even gone so far as to describe himself as a "local Tibetan", saying that he was "brought up by the Party, the people, the Tibetan Plateau and all the ethnic groups

of Tibet" and that he loves "the land and the hard-working people here." His appointment, part of a reshuffle that saw the transfer of the outgoing TAR Party chief Chen Quanguo to Xinjiang, followed this summer's highly secretive annual gathering of Party leaders at the seaside resort of Beidaihe in Hebei. ■

Two Tibetans detained just after release from prison

Two Tibetans just released from several years in prison have been detained again, according to sources. They are writer Gangkye Drubpa Kyab – who wrote a book on the protests in Tibet in 2008 – and 35-year old Samdrub, both are from Serthar (Chinese: Seda) in Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Kham, eastern Tibet) in Sichuan.



Tibetans and Uyghurs walking hand-in-hand in Geneva on 16 September to call for freedom of religion in China. Photo: ICT

Prominent Tibetan writer Gangkye Drubpa Kyab, a teacher by profession, had been released from prison and allowed to return home on 16 September, a year before the end of

his five-and-a-half-year sentence. But the next day he was detained again and is now back in detention, according to former political prisoner and monk Golog Jigme and other

Tibetan sources. Radio Free Asia reported that after a grand Tibetan reception following his release, police took Gangkye Drubpa Kyab back again into custody, and "warned him that if he does not change his thoughts and embrace the official political line he could be thrown back in jail." Kyab was first detained in February 2012 for "instigating campaigns for Tibet", according to sources quoted by Radio Free Asia.

Less is known about the charges against Samdrub, who was detained again on 18 September, less than a month after his release around 20 August, according to the Tibetan NGO Gu Chu Sum, based in Dharamsala, India. He had been in prison since June 2012, under suspicion of involvement in political activity.

According to Golog Jigme, both Tibetans may be accused of fresh political activity, but it is not yet known if they will face new charges. ■

Political Prisoner Focus

Tashi Wangchuk



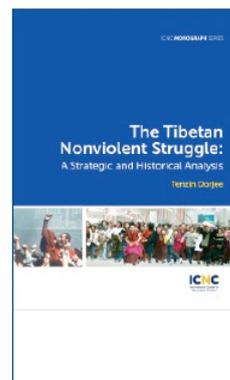
Tashi Wangchuk

Tashi Wangchuk, 31, has been detained by police in his home area of Jyegudo (Chinese: Yushu) in Qinghai since the end of January this year. This follows the release, in November 2015, of a [video by the New York Times](#) that documented his journey to Beijing to try to file a lawsuit against Yushu officials for not supporting the Tibetan language. He faces charges of 'separatism', although he has not advocated Tibetan independence, and has said that Tibet should have greater regional autonomy, especially in the issue of language, under Chinese governance. His lawyer, Liang Xiaojun said: "All he wants is to try to preserve Tibetan culture."

The Tibetan language – bedrock of Tibetan culture, religion and identity – has been steadily undermined under Chinese rule over the past six decades. The Chinese authorities focus on the dominance of the Chinese language to the detriment of Tibetan, and are also marginalising the Tibetan language by withdrawing it from the school curriculum. Chinese policies that undermine Tibetan language run counter to China's own laws, specifically the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law; Chinese legal protections for language and culture are not implemented in Tibet. ■

Reading Suggestion

The Tibetan Nonviolent Struggle: A Strategic and Historical Analysis, by Tenzin Dorjee



Editor:
International
Center on
Nonviolent Conflict
Monograph Series
Publication date:
September 2015

Contrary to the perception - fueled by Chinese propaganda during the 2008 Tibetan uprising - that the Tibetan struggle is heading toward extremism, this study shows that the movement since the 1950s has actually moved toward a tighter embrace of nonviolent resistance. The study traces this evolution, analysing the central themes, purposes, challenges, strategies, tactics and impacts of three major Tibetan uprisings over the past six decades. Tibetans are now waging a quiet, slow-building nonviolent movement that centres on strengthening the Tibetan national and cultural fabric. The author refers to this as transformative resistance, and this is happening in an immensely repressive political environment, which shows that there is a way to mobilise people power against even one of the most ruthless regimes in the world.

Download the [published manuscript in English](#).

Cartoon by Fifi



A cartoon by Belgian artist Fifi (Philippe Sadzot).

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▶ **4 & 5 NOVEMBER 2016:**
5th 16+1 Summit in Riga, Latvia
- ▶ **15 NOVEMBER 2016 (TBC):**
35th EU-China Human Rights Dialogue
- ▶ **1 & 2 DECEMBER 2016:**
18th EU-NGO Human Rights Forum: *"United against all forms of Torture"* in Brussels
- ▶ **10 DECEMBER 2016**
International Human Rights Day