

A letter of Appeal from the Tibetan Parliament in Exile to the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of China

10 self-immolations in October 2012 alone, marks the most extensive cases of tragic self-immolations in Tibet in one month till date. According to confirmed information available with us, so far 63 Tibetans have set themselves on fire including Dorjee Lhundup on November 4.

55 of them were male and 8 of them were female. The oldest among the self-immolators was 64 and the youngest 17 years of age. Altogether, 21 monks, 3 nuns, 34 laymen and 5 laywomen burned themselves to protest against the Chinese government.

52 of them have already succumbed to their injuries. The conditions and whereabouts of many more who have come under the stranglehold of the Chinese authorities are difficult to ascertain. This has turned the situation in Tibet into the most tragic and critical, unprecedented in the annals of human history. In view of the gravity of situation in Tibet, it warrants the Tibetan Administration to undertake numerous campaigns across the globe. However, in view of the upcoming 18th Congress of the Communist Party of China, there is every likelihood of ultra left conservatives and opportunists among the Chinese leadership who could distort and mislead our intentions. Therefore this appeal:

1 The Tibetan Administration not only expresses our deepest concern on the growing tragic cases of self-immolations by Tibetans all over Tibet in protest against the repressive policies of the Chinese Government, but also recognize these drastic actions as the highest form of non-violent activity for the larger interest of the suppressed.

2 In spite of the repeated appeals from the Tibetan leadership to the Tibetans in Tibet to value their precious lives, the Chinese government blatantly accuse His Holiness the Dalai Lama of instigating separatism through self-immolations. However, we clearly recognize the fact that all these drastic actions were driven by the wrong policies of the Chinese government in the last 60 years and particularly since 2008. Under the overall policy of assimilation and annihilation of Tibetan identity, through large scale systematic demographic aggression, Tibetan culture, religion and language have been completely undermined or destroyed. The peaceful expressions of Tibetan aspirations have always been met with harsh and inhuman violent repression, imprisonment and torture. Party work teams to monitor monasteries, innumerable check posts to restrict movement of Tibetans, racial discrimination and contempt for the Tibetan people have contributed to the upsurge of discontent amongst Tibetans.

3 In the last one decade China has achieved unprecedented economic development, unfortunately there has been no concomitant progress in political freedom leading to intense resentment and anger across sections of Chinese society ready to erupt like a volcano. Particularly in Tibet, due to the extremely repressive policies practiced by the ultra leftists comparable to the dark days of Cultural Revolution rendered the Tibetans bereft of any desire to live under the current Chinese leadership and have resort to the drastic acts of self-immolation calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom for the Tibetan people. For the purpose of fulfilling their aspirations, as clear as it can be in their slogans and their dying messages, we therefore request the 18th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party to consider the following four points of appeal:

1. Urge the 18th Congress to seriously deliberate on the continuing spate of self-immolations in Tibet, conduct a thorough investigation into the underlying causes and develop corrective policies and measures that meets the aspiration of the Tibetan people.
2. Urge the Chinese leadership to immediately stop its error-ridden policy of denigrating and accusing His Holiness the Dalai Lama with exaggerated and distorted statements. Such statements coupled with the measure to deny display of His Holiness' pictures causes immense pain in the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people. We urge the PRC government to usher in conducive atmosphere for our people to freely practice and promote our religion, culture and language.
3. Urge the 18th Congress to provide amnesty and release all Tibetan political prisoners to foster positive policy transformation in Tibet, following the precedence of seven such amnesties in the history of the Communist Party of China.
4. Urge the imminent upcoming new Chinese leadership to desist from the existing policy of avoidance or the false notion of not accepting the existence of a Tibetan Issue. Rather we urge you to revive the channels of meaningful contacts to resolve the longstanding issue of Tibet.

If the PRC government gives due consideration and follow up actions to prove their sincerity on the above four points, it will not only contribute to pacify the turbulent situation in Tibet, but would also be beneficial towards securing stability in China, promote peaceful co-existence between Tibetan and Chinese people besides contributing to the enhancement of China's image and dignity globally. These are our clear and strong position and sincere belief.

Tibetan Parliament in Exile
Dharamsala

7th November 2012, on the eve of the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of China