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swiss-tibetan friendship association  
gesellschaft schweizerisch-  
tibetische freundschaft  
g s t f

Berne, 10th March 2019

## Statement of the Swiss Parliamentary Group for Tibet at the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Tibetan uprising

Today we commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Tibetan uprising. During these days in March 1959 Tibetans rose up in protest against the Chinese foreign rule in Tibet. The Dalai Lama and tens of thousands of Tibetans with him were forced to flee outside the country. More than 100,000 Tibetans were killed during the violent crackdown by the Chinese army, countless Tibetans were arrested, and many of them were never released back to freedom from labor camps or prisons. Overall, Chinese occupation lead to more than 1.2 million Tibetans losing their lives, around 6,000 monasteries, temples and historical buildings were looted and devastated, and together with them irrecoverable pieces of Tibet's rich cultural heritage were destroyed.

China has ignored three resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly in 1959, 1961, and 1965, denouncing the invasion as violating international law and reminding China to respect Tibet's right to self-determination. China has also ignored His Holiness' 5-point peace plan of 1987 proposing the "middle way" approach which calls for "genuine autonomy" instead of full independence.

Plans to break Tibet's resistance by brutal force or so-called "economic development" have failed during the past 60 years. Tibetans within and outside Tibet are continuing their nonviolent movement for freedom and self-determination, joined by numerous support groups and parliamentarians worldwide. One of these is our Swiss Parliamentary Group who joins many others is commemorating the Tibetan uprising.

Sixty years of Chinese occupation threaten to completely extinguish Tibet's unique culture and religion. Use of Tibetan language is increasingly suppressed in schools and universities and replaced with Chinese. Free exercise of religion is prohibited. Religious institutions offering Buddhist studies are destroyed, such as the Larung Gar academy. Monks and nuns are forced to undergo so-called "patriotic education" where they have to denounce the Dalai Lama. Methods of repression are now exported from Tibet to other Chinese provinces and used against the Uigurs and other minorities.

Mass transfer of Chinese makes Tibetans a discriminated minority in their own country leading to their economic marginalization. The often-praised economic development by the Chinese government benefits the Chinese immigrants, and not the Tibetans. They are suffering from the downsides of this: reckless exploitation of mineral resources and deforestation have led to immense environmental destruction. Tibet's glaciers, also called the "Third Pole of Earth" are melting at increasing speed, aggravated by the widespread environmental damage, with catastrophic consequences for Tibet and South East Asian countries.

China is trying to gain increasing influence at an international level and does not hesitate to "discipline" other countries if they support His Holiness and the Tibetan cause. In its desire for expansion, China is using blunt economic power to take control even over developing countries, such as Switzerland via the Free Trade Agreement and various company takeovers.

Tibet and the Tibetan people, with their history and rich cultural heritage must not be forgotten. The Swiss Parliamentary Group, formed in 1987, with its 33 current members has always shown its support through numerous motions in parliament, the invite of His Holiness and Sikyong Lobsang Sangay to visit the Swiss parliament building, or the visit of members of the Parliamentary Group to Dharamsala. We as members of the Parliamentary Group will continue standing with the nonviolent movement to support the Tibetan cause. Sixty years after the Chinese invasion, our support is more important than ever. We support the legitimate demands of the Tibetans for cultural and religious freedom, human rights, democracy and self-determination. We stand with you!

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