



# TIBETAN BULLETIN

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CENTRAL TIBETAN ADMINISTRATION

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MARCH- APRIL 2020

## Focus

CTA's Response to Wuhan-originated COVID-19 Pandemic

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Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay led Task Force Briefings on COVID-19

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CTA functionaries and Tibetans worldwide leads collective relief initiative

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CTA launches month-long Global Advocacy Campaign on  
Panchen Lama's 31st Birthday

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**TIBETAN BULLETIN**

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**CTA President applauds Tibetan healthcare workers worldwide tackling Covid-19 pandemic**

The President of Central Tibetan Administration Dr. Lobsang Sangay addressed a press briefing on the current status of Wuhan-origin COVID-19 pandemic in the Tibetan community.



President Dr. Lobsang Sangay of Central Tibetan Administration. Photo/Tenzin Jigme/CTA

The press briefing highlighted four key points: the situation of Tibetans dealing with coronavirus in New York and India; special notice for overseas Tibetans in India; inputs and suggestions from the President for the TSGs, elderly and young members of Tibetan community in overcoming physical and mental distress during the lockdown.

As for the situation in New York, President Dr Sangay said over 16 Tibetan health workers in the city have self-quarantined themselves to prevent the spread of the virus in the community. He clarified that not all of them have contracted the virus but due to probable exposure to infected patients, they have self-quarantined as a precaution.

He urged Tibetans worldwide to pray for all the health workers on the frontline for their selfless contributions.

"I on behalf of CTA and Tibetans around the world like to highly thank and applaud health care workers across the globe for their selfless contributions during this crisis," he said.

President highlighted the tremendous services being offered by the Tibetan community in North America and Europe in regard to especially looking after the mental well-being of health care workers by organising online teaching sessions with Buddhist teachers and geshes.

He added that similar sessions featuring Buddhist experts and meditation teachers are also being organised through TibetTV for the older people where they are offered advice and mechanism for dealing with stress and anxiety related to the novel pandemic.

Similarly, President Sangay also informed that the prescriptions of rilbus (Tibetan medicinal pills) by former personal physician to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Dr. Tamding Tsewang are being distributed in the Tibetan communities. The supplements help recover fatigue, sleep deprivation and build immunity.

President then issued a special notice for the overseas Tibetans in India to immediately get tested in case any symptoms occur. In addition to that, concerns regarding visa expiration of those of overseas Tibetans must be contacted to local settlement officer and representative officer.

Lastly, he advised the students to make constructive use of the lockdown period in their studies.

**16th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile approves CTA 2020-21 budget**

In the light of the COVID-19 outbreak across the world and with an increasing number of confirmed cases of positive patients in India, the budget session of the 16th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile for the fiscal year 2020-2021, scheduled to hold for 10 days from 17-27 March 2020, convened for only one day as a measure to contain the spread of the virus.

The session began with Speaker's session commencement announcement which was followed by his opening speech and the appointment of Acting Speaker and Ad Hoc committee members.

Speaker in his brief opening remark said that the one-day budget session that has been convened as per the Charter of Tibetans in exile, which instructs Parliament to hold a Parliamentary session within a period of six months. Speaker further said that the session will strictly follow the set agenda which includes presentation and approval of the annual budget of Central Tibetan Administration for the year 2020-21 and adoption of official resolutions of obituary and solidarity.

The list of business marking the official obituary reference was followed with Parliamentarian Ngawang Tharpa Gewatsang paying tribute to Yonten, a 24 Tibetan youth, who self-immolated on 26 November 2019 to protest the repressive policies of the Chinese government. Parliamentarian Youdon Aukatsang paid official obituary reference to former Geluk Parliamentarian Late Gajang Geshe Lharampa Tashi Gyaltzen, who passed away on 21 January 2020 at the age of 64.

Parliamentarian Ven Khenpo Soman Tenphel presented the official solidarity motion on the critical situations inside Tibet, which was supported by Parliamentarian Ven. Geshe Monlam Tharchin. The motion was passed unanimously.

Kalon Karma Yeshe of Department of Finance, Central Tibetan Administration presented the 2020-2021 Budget of Central Tibetan Administration, which was subsequently followed by the presentation of Précis report prepared by the Budget Estimation Committee of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile by Parliamentarian Ven. Khenpo Jamphele Tenzin.

The motion for debate on the Central Tibetan Administration's 2020-2021 Budget was raised by Parliamentarian Ven. Geshe Lharampa Gowo Lobsang Phende and supported by Parliamentarian



Dhondup Tashi Tsaneytsang but discussion on the budget was put off as per the advice from the Speaker in order to curtail the session in a single day.

The budgets of all the departments of the Central Tibetan Administration and the offices under various departments were passed and approved unanimously except for Tibet Policy Institute, Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Indo Tibet Coordination Office, Office of Tibet (Washington DC), and Tibetan Community Development Fund (TCDF), which were approved by the majority.

The Revised Appropriation Act of 2019-2020 and the Appropriation Act of 2020-2021, presented by Deputy Speaker Ven. Acharya Yeshe Phunstok and supported by the Chairman of the Budget Estimate Committee Ven. Khenpo Jamphel Tenzin, where the revised appropriation Act of 2019-2020 was passed unanimously while the Appropriation Act of 2020-2021 was passed with a majority in the house.

As per document no- 9, the revised appropriation act of 2019-2020 approved the need for a total income of Rs. 3,429,101,658 to be accumulated by Kashag and a total of Rs. 3,283,576,332 for the expenditure (annual budget and interim budget) proposed to be made from consolidated fund and the funds not included in the consolidated fund.

As per document no 10, the appropriation act of 2020-2021 approved the need for a total income of Rs. 2,683,622,130 to be accumulated by Kashag and approved a total amount of Rs. 2,754,487,029 for the expenditure (annual budget) proposed to be made from consolidated fund and the funds not included in the consolidated fund.

Afterwards, the Secretary-General of Tibetan Parliamentary Secretariat Tsewang Ngodup read out the leave of absence of the Member of Parliament and Speaker gave his conclusion speech.

Speaker in his conclusion speech appreciated everyone present in the house for their participation in enabling the session to conclude in one day. He

thanked Budget Estimate Committee, Department of Health, Department of Information and International Relations, Department of Security, and others for their assistance.

As the year 2020 will be marked as the year of gratitude to His Holiness the Dalai Lama by CTA, he urged all the Tibetans to follow His Holiness the Dalai Lama's advice and remain united for the common cause of Tibet. He prayed for the speedy resolution of COVID-19 crisis. He also offered prayers for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the resolution of Tibet's issue.



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## CTA's Press Statement on China joining the UN Human Rights Council's Panel



The UN Human Rights Council in session.  
Photo/FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP

In light of China's increasing dominance and aggression at the United Nations, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) is appalled to learn of China's appointment to the UN Human Rights Council's influential Consultative Group, a panel comprising of only five nations. China will represent Asia-Pacific Group at the UNHRC panel from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

This enables China, one of the worst abusers of human rights in the world, to

play a key role in selecting several UN human rights mandate holders or Special Procedures over the next year, including picking the Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Opinion and Expression; health issues, Working Groups on Arbitrary Detention; and Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. Enforced disappearance is a tool used extensively by the Chinese Government. The enforced disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima is a prominent case perpetrated by the Chinese Government and May 17 this year will be exactly 25 years since he was abducted along with his parents and disappeared by the Chinese Government.

The candidates for the UN mandate holders, who are world's human rights experts charged to investigate, monitor and report on specific human rights issues would be heavily influenced by China. Despite China's long record of human rights violations, its representation in the UNHRC panel is a concerning turn of events for all human rights defenders and advocates.

T.G. Arya, Secretary of Department of Information, CTA said that it is very unfortunate that China has been appointed to the UN Human Rights Council panel. "China is on the top list of countries known for gross violations of human rights and religious freedom. By appointing one of the worst human rights offenders to the UNHRC panel, the Council is sending a wrong message to the international community. It will greatly disturb the world order and restructure the human rights narratives. Tibetans, Chinese, Uyghurs, Mongolians and Hong Kong people, who are all victims of the Chinese Communist Party's oppressive regime, all now fear that they will not get fair hearing. It is like putting an eagle in a dove-cote," he said.

China never failed to attract international condemnation over its human rights record. For the last five years, Tibet under Chinese occupation has been named the second-least free region in the world. China was also ranked the world's worst abuser of internet freedom. The UN should seriously

reconsider China's appointment in the Human Rights Council panel.

Coordinator of the Asia-Pacific States, the UN Permanent Mission of Oman endorsed the nomination of Mr. Jiang Duan, a Minister at China's Mission in Geneva. The other four member states are Chad (from the African States), Slovenia (Eastern European States), Spain (Western European and other states), and one pending nomination from Latin American and the Caribbean States.

## Sakya Trizin Rinpoche espouses oneness of humanity in the time of Coronavirus pandemic



42nd Sakya Trizin Rinpoche on COVID-19.  
Photo: Screengrab

As part of TibetTV's online session on Buddhist teaching to cope up with the stress and anxiety related to COVID-19 pandemic, 42nd Sakya Trizin Rinpoche took the opportunity to explain the significance of oneness of humanity in the time of COVID-19 crisis.

Just as His Holiness the Dalai Lama always emphasises the oneness of 7 billion human beings, Rinpoche asked viewers to focus on the oneness of humanity rather than secondary differences. Doing so, he said, will enable individual to take better care of others well being.

Rinpoche further urged to diligently follow the advice of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Rinpoches in cultivating positive thoughts in order to pacify the crisis while not panicking and spreading fear.

"Whatever activities we do in our daily lives, in order to achieve success we need to put that much effort. Similarly, the crisis we are facing at the moment calls for a global effort" said Trizin Rinpoche.

He emphasised that the time to practise love, compassion, and bodhicitta are, perhaps now more than ever. If practised whole-heartedly, he affirmed that it becomes a blessing in disguise. He noted that Buddha himself has mentioned the benefits of practising them in the sutra.

Rinpoche elucidated on the mechanisms to deal with mental afflictions caused by the outbreak through Buddhist perception.

He defined that dharma practise is a training of the mind focusing only on positive thoughts. And now with the ongoing global pandemic in the name of a virus, he urged not to be discouraged and face the challenge with great encouragement.

"From the Buddhist point of view, when we see Buddha, we should perceive Buddha as a doctor, his teachings as medicines, and ourselves as patients", Rinpoche said. He explained that all the negative afflictions such as anger and fear are nothing but sickness and gaining realisation on overcoming the negative thoughts equates to following a doctor's advice.

With such perception, he advised practising of Buddha dharma as eminent. He noted that the Buddha dharma should be practised by all the followers of Buddha in order to overcome the sickness of negativities that consumes our lives.

As the Wuhan originated COVID-19 is spreading like a wildfire and the number of the patients besides the death toll is rising every day, Rinpoche appealed everyone to sincerely pray for the complete recovery of the patients without any exceptions.

Rinpoche also emphasised on strictly following the advice of the medical

experts and nurses including the guidelines and rules set out by the administration.

"I highly admire the noble contributions of healthcare workers around the world tackling the COVID-19 and pray for their wellbeing and may we all overcome the crisis with great success".

## Embracing an attitude of compassion and gratitude as we overcome the coronavirus pandemic

The 17th Gyalwang Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, today spoke about the ongoing COVID-19 crisis through his Facebook page to millions of Tibetan Buddhist followers around the world.



42nd Sakya Trizin Rinpoche on COVID-19.  
Photo: Screengrab

His Eminence stated that despite being on a retreat, he felt the need to allay the distress of people caused by the crisis. Since the outbreak of the disease, an unprecedented turmoil has been unleashed on people's lives and wellbeing, the uncertainty facing us in its aftermath.

To counter that he highlighted Buddha's message on the impermanence of life, describing the nature of life as transient, changing every moment and stated that the human fallibility of failure to comprehend that truth is the cause of our suffering. When things go our way, we are happy and optimistic, however, when it's the opposite, we are unable to deal with it.

He said that the current dire situation, viewed from a positive perspective,



presents each of us an opportunity to reflect on the precious things that we take for granted and live with renewed energy for the betterment of our lives.

He added that the disease affected all, irrespective of gender, race, nationality, social status, etc. Developed countries like America, Spain, Italy, and the UK are suffering severely at the moment, and developing countries will undergo similar or likely worse situation. Even a single infected person in a country endangers the whole world. Therefore, cooperation is a must to overcome the pandemic.

The news of the daily rise in the death toll that we learn every day is benumbing, but we must realize that each of them are living, breathing human beings, he said. Health workers are bravely going out to combat this pandemic, and we must appreciate, commend and support their efforts.

Gyalwang Karmapa informed his Buddhists followers that he had planned to hold one-hour daily prayers from this Saturday for a week, praying for the world to overcome this crisis.

“We can all pray together for world peace and for the epidemic to be quelled. So I would like to ask everyone to pray together for everyone in the world to be happy and for this pandemic to quickly pass.”

His Eminence in solidarity with efforts to help those affected by the crisis has donated 28 lakhs in total, towards the PM Relief Fund, the state governments of Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Bihar.

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## Tibetan nurses volunteer to join India's fight against Coronavirus

Two Tibetan nurses from Miao Choephelling Tibetan Settlement in Arunachal Pradesh have volunteered to help the government fight against the Wuhan-origin COVID-19 pandemic, Miao Settlement Officer Tenzin Chokden said on .

Tenzin Choekyi and Mindu Lhamo who are currently in the Settlement amid nationwide lockdown came forward to join as a volunteer nurse in Tibetan Primary Health Care, Miao.



Four volunteer Tibetan nurses from Shimla Tibetan Settlement.

On behalf of Miao Settlement Office, Tenzin Rangdol, Acting Settlement Officer and Lhawang, Executive Secretary, TPHC felicitated the two nurses-volunteers with Tibetan scarf and applauded them for serving the people in this time of crisis.

Earlier another Tibetan health professional, Tenzin Woser from Mundgod, Hubli volunteered to join the fight.

Tenzin Woser, resident of camp no. 8 of Mundgod Tibetan Settlement is already serving at the DTR hospital in Mundgod, a unit of the Department of Health, CTA.

Likewise, four Tibetan nurses from Shimla Tibetan settlement in Himachal Pradesh have also volunteered to join the fight against COVID-19 catastrophe. The settlement office of Shimla and the public highly appreciates the health professionals Tashi Norzom, Kalsang Wangmo, Tsewang Lhamo, and Tashi Yangchen for their dedication and determination.

Since the outbreak of the Wuhan-origin virus, Tibetan healthcare workers across the world, especially in the US, have been working at the frontline, fighting the pandemic.

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases globally has crossed 2 million with more than 137,000 confirmed deaths.

In India, the cases climbed to 10,824 on Thursday with a death toll of 420, according to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

## Kyabje Gaden Tripa contributes over 5 lakh to PM CARES and Karnataka CM COVID-19 relief fund

Kyabje Gaden Tripa, head of the Gelug tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, has pledged Rs 5 lakh to PM CARES fund and CM COVID-19 relief fund to support the relief efforts in the nationwide fight against the COVID-19 pandemic

Administrator of Sera Jey Monastery handed over the cheque of Rs 3 lakh to PM CARES fund and 2 lakh to CM COVID-19 relief fund to Honourable Chief Minister B. S. Yediyurappa on 15 April.



The 104th Gaden Tripa Kyabje Jetsun Lobsang Tenzin Palsangpo.

A letter of solidarity from the Gaden Tripa was also conveyed to the Honourable Chief Minister.

“We deeply share the concerns over what is happening over the world and in particular the difficulties in India in connection with COVID-19,” Kyabje Gaden Tripa said in the letter.

He also thanked the outstanding leadership and the timely actions taken by the Prime Minister, the Central and Karnataka state government in curbing the spread of the virus in the country.

Rinpoche expressed his heartfelt prayers and wished for India to achieve a speedy resolution to the crisis.

He also assured that the Tibetan monastic community are observing prayers for all those who lost their lives to COVID-19 and the people who are fighting the virus.

## Kyabje Jonang Gyaltsab Rinpoche pledges over 1 lakh to CM relief fund, donates relief worth 1 lakh to poor



Kyabje Jonang Gyaltsab Rinpoche donates Rs 1,00,555 towards CM Coronavirus relief fund.

Kyabje Jonang Gyaltsab Rinpoche, head of Jonang tradition in exile donated Rs 1,00,555 towards CM Coronavirus relief fund. The contribution was handed over to the Honourable Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur by Rinpoche's representatives.

In addition, Jonang Gyaltsab Rinpoche also distributed 1 lakh worth of rations to the locals of the Sidhpur community in Dharamshala.

Jonang monks Tashi Namgyal and Tashi Dorje who was accompanied by the President of Local Tibetan Assembly, Shimla Tenzin Yeshe handed over the cheque along with the official letter from Jonang Gyaltsab Rinpoche to CM Thakur.

For detailed news visit:  
[www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net)

## Sakya Buddhist community in Dehradun led by Sakya Trizin donates 23 lakhs to CM relief fund

In the spirit of solidarity with the people of Uttarakhand and India to help combat and win the war against the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, His Eminence the 42nd Sakya Trizin Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, the head of Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism and HE Gyana Vajra Sakya on behalf of Sakya Buddhist Community Group in Dehradun donated 23 lakhs toward CM relief fund.

In addition, Dolma Phodrang Society and Sakya Centre Society distributed 130 ration kits to needy families in the area. HE Gyana Vajra Sakya and Dagmo Sonam Palkyi distributed relief aid of food essentials to over 200 needy families in Dehradun area.

Likewise, Sakya Nunnery in Sahastradhara Road distributed 110 ration kits to needy families around the Rajpur and the Jakhan area with the assistance of police officers. On the same day, the Sakya Dolma Phodrang Society distributed 50 care packages of juice, fruits, and snacks to police officers who are on duty in appreciation for their dedication and hard work.



HE Sakya Trizin Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and HE Gyana Vajra Rinpoche present Uttarakhand Chief Minister, Honourable Trivendra Singh Rawat, a contribution of Rs 23 lakh on behalf of the Sakya Buddhist community in Uttarakhand.

Sakya Centre Society also distributed 150 ration kits to needy families at Rajpur and canal road area with the help of local councillors.

## Kyabje Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche commits over 2 million rupees towards COVID-19 relief efforts in India



Kyabje Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche commits over 2 million rupees towards COVID-19 relief efforts in India.

The outpour of Tibetan Buddhist leaders and public's solidarity with the People and Government of India in this Wuhan-originated Coronavirus crisis has been extraordinary.

Through contributions to the Central, State and District COVID-19 relief fund as well as distributing ration and food essentials to those worst affected by the pandemic, Tibetans have been leading a collective initiative.

Last week, Kyabje Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche donated a sum of Rs 4 lakh to Arunachal Chief Minister COVID-19 relief fund and 1 lakh to PM CARES fund.

Through his Kundeling Charitable Trust, Rinpoche donated rations and food essential worth over 9 lakh (Rs 9,50,000), benefiting over a thousand underprivileged families in the villages around Mundgod, Karnataka.

Including donations and relief supplies, Rinpoche has committed a total of over 2 million rupees (20,00,113) to COVID-19 relief efforts in India.

Rinpoche also contributed Rs 5,00,113 to the Central Tibetan Administration to support CTA's Coronavirus relief efforts. He has also contributed Rs



50,000 to provide relief for the needy through the initiative of the Gyumed Tantric Monastery.

More and more Tibetan public, led by the Buddhist leaders and monasteries across India, continue to come forward to help their district and state governments combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

## CTA contributes Rs 3 Lakh towards District Covid-19 Fund

Extending solidarity and support with the commendable efforts of the Kangra DC Office in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, the CTA led by President Dr Lobsang Sangay contributed Rs 3 lakh towards the District COVID-19 relief fund, and encouraged Tibetans to extend their support through voluntary contributions.

In his letter to Deputy Commissioner Rakesh Kumar Prajapati, President Dr Lobsang Sangay said: "As effectively as you have managed to contain the spread of the disease in the district, you have also ensured the continued provision of essential household and pharmaceutical goods for the general public while implementing a strict curfew."

"As a token of our support and solidarity, the Central Tibetan Administration would like to contribute Rs 3 lakh towards the District COVID-19 Relief Fund. We will continue to cooperate to your ongoing efforts."

He also thanked the DC for all the support extended towards the Tibetan community in this crisis, especially for providing guidance from time to time in dealing with the virus.

"On behalf of the Tibetan community in Dharamshala, I once again extend my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to you and your team for the excellent work," the President concluded.

The letter and the cheque were personally handed to the Deputy Commissioner by DIIR Secretary Tsewang Gyalpo Arya,



*Kashag's letter and the cheque personally handed over to the Deputy Commissioner Shri Rakesh Kumar Prajapati by DIIR Secretary Tsewang Gyalpo Arya, Dharamshala Settlement Officer Kunga Tsering and Head of Security Branch Office, Kalsang Tenzin.*

Dharamshala Settlement Officer Kunga Tsering and Head of Security Branch Office, Tenzin Kalsang.

Shri Rakesh Kumar Prajapati acknowledged the letter and the donation with thanks. He appreciated and thanked CTA for this gesture of solidarity and said the Tibetan community has been very cooperative in this pandemic situation.

The CTA delegates also met SDM Dr Harish Gajju and thanked him for all the support, and assured CTA's full cooperation in dealing with the COVID-19 situation.

## Rep. McGovern calls on China to release the Panchen Lama amid high risk Covid-19 concerns in prisons

US Congressman Jim McGovern, co-chair of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and of Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission called for the immediate release of the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima who was forcibly disappeared by the Chinese government at the age of six on 17 May 1995.

In the statement released on the 31st birthday of the Panchen Lama, Representative McGovern said, "My birthday present to Gedhun Choekyi Nyima is to renew my calls for his

immediate and unconditional freedom including his family."

The Panchen Lama is one of the highest position in Tibetan Buddhism and according to tradition plays a role in the recognition of the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and because of that, he was forcibly disappeared on 17 May 1995, just three days after he was identified by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as the 11th Panchen Lama.

Criticising China's persecution of religious leaders and practices in Tibet, Representative McGovern said "they fear Tibetan Buddhism", "the Dalai Lama" and "a true and independent Panchen Lama."

"And fear often leads the government to violate human rights," he added.



*US Congressman Jim McGovern renews call for the Panchen Lama's immediate and unconditional freedom.*

He called out the Chinese government to "tell the world that he and his family are safe and well," arguing that no government is justified in doing what the Chinese government has done to the Panchen Lama by kidnapping him and controlling his entire life and the lives of his family members for decades with no end in sight.

He specifically urged that the Chinese government, in view of the global COVID-19 pandemic which is scientifically proved to have first traced in China, to release the prisoners and those in detention who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

"Today, all of us confronting a worldwide health crisis, the global COVID-19 pandemic. Science indicates

that the virus first appeared in China with tragically tens of thousands of people have known to be infected and thousands have died. now it is spread everywhere."

With the virus being highly contagious and transmissible, he said: "prisoners and those in detention are at high risk." For these reasons, international health and human rights bodies are urging the immediate and substantial reduction in the prison populations around the world.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has called on governments to examine the ways to release those particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, among them those who are sick as well as those low-risk offenders. Prisoners of conscience are by definition low-risk offenders.

"He[Panchen Lama] should be free because as a confined person he is likely at higher risk from the coronavirus that is claiming the lives of people. He should be free because he has the right under international law to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion including the right to practise his religion as he chooses. He should be free because he is still a young man and it is the right thing to do so happy birthday Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. May this year be the year we have the privilege to meet you in person."



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## USCIRF calls China to release the 11th Panchen Lama who turns 31 today

The 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, one of the highest Tibetan spiritual leaders after the Dalai Lama, who has been missing since



"Saturday, April 25 will be Panchen Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's 31st birthday," added USCIRF Commissioner Tenzin Dorjee, who has advocated for his freedom for four years now. "The Panchen Lama of Tibet has been kept isolated since he was a child and denied the opportunity to live a normal life. We urge the Chinese government to show a video evidence of his safety during this COVID-19 pandemic out of human dignity and free the Panchen Lama immediately."

U.S. Representative James McGovern also advocates on behalf of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima through the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission's Defending Freedoms Project.

the age of six turns 31 today. He was abducted along with the rest of his family by the Chinese government on 17 May 1995, three days after he was recognised as the incarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

In commemoration of missing Panchen Lama's 31st birthday, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) today renewed its call for the Chinese government to release Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, one of USCIRF's Religious Prisoners of Conscience. On May 15, 1995, His Holiness the Dalai Lama chose the then six-year-old Gedhun to be the 11th Panchen Lama. Three days later, Chinese authorities kidnapped him and his family. He has not been seen or heard from since.

"The Chinese government is so desperate to stifle Tibetan Buddhism that it kidnapped a six-year-old boy," noted USCIRF Vice Chair Nadine Maenza, who advocates for Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as part of USCIRF's Religious Prisoners of Conscience Project. "Unfortunately, Gedhun's tragic plight represents the struggles of millions of Chinese believers to practice their faith in the face of an unprecedented crackdown."

In its 2019 Annual Report, USCIRF called on the administration to use its authority under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act and the International Religious Freedom Act to impose targeted sanctions on Chinese officials responsible for severe religious freedom violations, especially Chen Quanguo, the current Communist



Party Secretary of Xinjiang and former Secretary for Tibet.

In February 2020, USCIRF released a factsheet explaining how the Chinese government's new Regulation for Religious Groups could further restrict religious freedom.



## Statement of the President of the Central Tibetan Administration on the 61st Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day

On 10th March 1959, people of Tibet revolted against China's illegal occupation of a sovereign Tibet. With their fists in the air, Tibetans flooded the streets of Lhasa shouting, "Bhodkyi dhakpo bhodmi yin!" "Tibet belongs to Tibetans!"

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet describes 10th March 1959 as the "day destined to be the most momentous Lhasa had ever seen," in his memoir *My Land and My People*. His Holiness explains, "I felt as if I were standing between two volcanoes, each likely to erupt at any moment. On the one side, there was the vehement, unequivocal, unanimous protest of my people against the Chinese regime, on the other, there was the armed might of a powerful and aggressive occupation force."

The Chinese responded to the peaceful Tibetan demonstrations with brutal force. The then Indian Counsel General in Lhasa reported that the Chinese People's Liberation Army unleashed its "artillery mortars, machine guns and all types of automatic weapons" on defenceless Tibetans.

We are here, together, as one people, on the 61st anniversary of that day, to pay our tribute to those brave daughters and sons of Tibet, and to draw inspiration from their sacrifices in our struggle to restore freedom and peace in Tibet. For the last 60 years, Tibetans in Tibet have been steadfast in their struggle against the illegal occupation of Tibet.

What is life today for ordinary Tibetans under Chinese rule? The recent 2020 Freedom House report, for the fifth year in a row, placed Tibet as the second least free region in the world, after Syria. Reporters Without Borders reported Chinese ever-tightening control over the press in its 2019 World Press Freedom Index. The 2020 Human Rights Watch report highlighted the threat to the Tibetan language as China forces politically motivated bilingual education policies in Tibet. These facts



*President of the Central Tibetan Administration delivers the statement on the 61st Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day.*

of increasing and continuing oppression of Tibetans cannot be separated from their everyday acts of resistance.

Since 2009, 154 Tibetans have self-immolated. The latest being 24-year-old Yonten from Ngaba Meruma Township who passed away after self-immolation on 26th November 2019.

In 2015, Tashi Wangchuk, a Tibetan language activist said in an interview with the New York Times that, "So many Tibetans have self-immolated. I can understand them now because we have very few ways to solve problems." He was arrested in early 2016 and sentenced to five years in prison for "inciting separatism". On 27th January this year, nearly a thousand writers, linguists, translators, and language activists signed the open letter issued by the PEN America calling for his immediate release.

Similarly, Sonam Palden, a 22-year-old monk from Kirti Monastery, has been in incommunicado detention since September 2019. Palden is alleged to have been critical of China's policy on Tibetan language in a WeChat post. The Human Rights Watch confirms that the Chinese language is imposed even at the kindergarten level. Since 2019, Chinese

authorities in Golog have mandated the Chinese language in primary and middle schools, displacing the Tibetan language as the medium of instruction. Children in Nangchen have been banned from attending Tibetan language classes in monasteries during school holidays. The authorities described the study of the Tibetan language as being "illegal".

This past November, seven Tibetans were arrested for their peaceful protest in Sershul, Eastern Tibet. Following the protest, 30 monks and laypeople were detained on suspicion of possessing 'pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama'.

The Order no 13, issued by the Chinese government in November 2019, aims to sinicize Tibetan Buddhism and put draconian restrictions on religious institutions. Last year, the Chinese government forcibly evicted 7100 monks, nuns and Buddhist practitioners from the Yachen Gar Buddhist Institute amidst its ongoing demolition. Many of the evictees were forced into the so-called "Patriotic Re-education Camp." The Chinese Communist Party bans even retired Tibetan party cadres from taking part in Buddhist religious activities.

The 3rd session of the so-called 11th

Tibetan Autonomous Region's People's Congress held in January this year legislated mandatory "ethnic unity." Set to take effect from 1st May 2020, this law will formally legalize inter-marriages, subsidies for Chinese migrants and other attempts to sinicize the Tibetan identity. Sinicization is the problem, not the solution.

The recent news of a secret agreement signed between Nepal and China during the Chinese President Xi's visit last year and a similar economic treaty signed between China and Myanmar with the latter recognizing Tibet along with Xinjiang and Taiwan as "inalienable parts of China" are examples of China's aggressive misuse of its economic clout to advance its political agenda.

That acts of resistance by ordinary Tibetans are examples of a people who seek to protest an unjust powerful colonial rule through the truth of their experience and their courage. The international community's recognition of the truth of our struggle is crucial. We thank our supporters for continuing to stand with the Tibetan people and we thank international organizations for supporting the truth of our struggle by providing factual albeit alarming reports on Tibet, every year.

In a momentous event, on January 28 this year, the Tibetan Policy and Support Act (HR 4331) was passed with an overwhelming vote in the United States House of Representatives. I, on behalf of all Tibetans, would like to thank Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House of Representative, Co-sponsors Representative James Patrick McGovern (D), Representative Christopher Henry Smith (R) and all the bipartisan Members of Congress who helped and supported the passage of this Act. We hope that the Senate will pass the same Act and thank Co-sponsors Senator Marco Rubio (R) and Senator Ben Cardin (D) for their leadership.

In October 2019, during his official visit to Dharamsala, Ambassador Samuel Brownback, reiterated the United States' support for His Holiness and the Tibetan people. Ambassador Brownback

was one of the highest United States government officials to visit the CTA and Dharamsala. He called on China to immediately release the 11th Panchen Lama who was forcefully abducted and has been missing for the last 25 years. The Ambassador also endorsed the resolution on the reincarnation adopted by the 8th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups, and the 3rd Special General Meeting held last year. The 14th Tibetan Religious Conference also stated that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the sole authority concerning his reincarnation.

The Dutch and Belgian governments have also stated their positions clearly. The Belgian government has said that it is the Tibetan religious community who will decide about the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama without interference from temporal authorities.

During the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) led long-life prayer offered to His Holiness by the Tibetans across the globe in May 2019, His Holiness reaffirmed to live for over 110 years. While no amount of words are enough to express our immeasurable gratitude towards His Holiness, we would like to dedicate the year 2020 as the "Thank You, Dalai Lama" year to celebrate His Holiness' legacy and his four commitments. We welcome Tibetans and friends worldwide to organize activities in your capacities to create awareness about the life and work of His Holiness.

We welcome the recent announcement of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet's decision to visit Xinjiang this year. However, we strongly urge her to visit Tibet and press China for unfettered access in order to monitor the deteriorating human rights conditions in Tibet.

Under the enlightened leadership of His Holiness and the CTA, Tibetans in South Asia are recognized as one of the world's most successful and effective refugee communities. If the Chinese government harbours any hope that the Tibet issue will gradually lose its momentum, we would like to send a clear message that

we will persist. The indomitable courage of Tibetans inside Tibet will continue to inspire those of us in exile to strengthen our commitment. Peace in Tibet can be only restored through the Middle Way Approach. Therefore, the Chinese government must resume dialogue with the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Representing the true spirit of unity of the three provinces of Tibet, Tibetans in exile are collectively striving to realize the aspirations of Tibetans inside Tibet. Those of us who live in freedom have the responsibility to safeguard the larger interest of our people and to lead the Tibetan cause forward.

The current COVID-19 epidemic is a global public health emergency and encourage everyone to take precautionary measures. We offer our prayers in solidarity to all those countries and individuals affected by this epidemic. Inside Tibet, it is suspected that there are more than 100 coronavirus cases. However, due to the lack of freedom of speech and transparency in China, we are unable to get actual confirmation. We express our deepest sympathy to Tibetans inflicted by this outbreak and pray that the coronavirus is contained.

The Kashag would like to take this opportunity to offer our deep appreciation to the great nation and people of India, the governments, the Parliaments, the Tibet Support Groups across the world, individuals and organizations who support the just cause of Tibet and stand in solidarity with the Tibetan people in this critical time. I would like to thank the Members of European Parliament for establishing a Tibet Interest Group at the recently elected European Parliament. I urge all of you to be with us till the day human rights and justice prevail in Tibet.

All Tibetans, wherever we may be today, understand the significance of 10th March 1959. It marks the beginning of a struggle initiated by ordinary Tibetans in Tibet. Those of us who live in exile carve their words in our hearts and commit to making the day a reality when



all Tibetans will be together and free in Tibet.

Finally, I offer my earnest prayers for a healthy and long life of our most revered

leader, His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama. In March 1959, he was forced to flee under extremely difficult circumstances. I pray that His Holiness will soon return home.

Bhod Gyalo!

The President

10th March 2020

## Statement of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on the commemoration of the 61st Tibetan National Uprising Day

The army of the People's Republic of China began its invasion of Tibet in about the year 1949. Following courses of developments since then, the government of the Communist Party of China, employing the art of the trio of hypocrisy, deception, and deceit on the people of Tibet, eventually bared its naked intention to brazenly occupy the territory of the great nation of Tibet. And with devilish intentions, it targeted the personal safety of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The situation culminated to such an extent of severity that it became impossible for the people of Tibet to endure the ever-worsening development anymore. The result was a mammoth, spontaneous peaceful uprising in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, involving people from all the Three Provinces of the country, on the 10th of March in 1959. Today marks the 61st anniversary of that momentous occasion in the history of Tibet. Ever since that great uprising day, the Tibetan people have, wherever they happened to reside, commemorated the occasion as a historically important event. The Central Tibetan Administration has also been marking the occasion as the Tibetan Martyr's Day in memory of the heroic men and women who have made sacrifices in the struggle for the country. The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile offers obeisance to the heroic Tibetan men and women who outrightly sacrificed their all, including their very lives, with unwavering courage, determination, and actions for the cause of the religious freedom and nationhood of Tibet. The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile also wishes to express solidarity with the heroic Tibetan men and women who even today continue to suffer all kinds of hardship due to persecution and torture under the repressive policies of the communist Chinese government. We pray to the almighty ocean of victorious



Speaker Pema Jungney delivering Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile's statement on the commemoration of the 61st Tibetan National Uprising Day.

ones of the Three Jewels that Tibetans living in Tibet may win their freedom from the current state of hardship and suffering to be able to enjoy their status as a free people.

Ever since communist-ruled China began its invasion of Tibet more than 70 years ago, over a million Tibetan people were put to death by unnatural means and causes. Besides, thousands of religious places were totally destroyed. With such and other kinds of acts of aggression, the territory, as well as the natural and human resources of Tibet, have been subjected to all manners of heart-wrenching brutalities of destruction, plunder, and takeover. Besides, China has been unrelenting in the continuous pursuit of vile policies designed to obliterate the very representation of the Tibetan identity embodied by our religious heritage, culture, and language. It has deprived the Tibetan people, the rightful owners of the territory, of even the most basic of their human rights. Under the policy of repression of the Communist Chinese government, the life

of the Tibetan people has been reduced to the brutal harshness of suffering hell on earth, marked by endless repression and torture of immeasurable magnitude. Even more than that, China is now poised to fully transform the land of the Tibetan people into that of the Chinese people and the seriousness of the situation today is such that it teeters over the abyss of annihilation. It was due to the absoluteness of their utter inability to endure anymore the gravity of the continuing brutality of the policies of the communist Chinese government that the people of Tibet have been compelled to carry out a series of campaigns of peaceful protests throughout the period of the occupation rule. Particularly, in the year 2008, a great number of large-scale campaigns of protest broke out throughout the three traditional provinces of Tibet, especially in capital Lhasa. The government of China launched a crackdown by sending in its army which used assault weapons on peaceful protesters without any show of even a fiber of mercy. The brutality of the repression with beating, firing, etc.,

resulted in the death of many Tibetan men and women, including laypeople and monastics. But that was not all. Unable to bear the agony of the campaign of the pursuant repression and finding themselves utterly hapless for any viable means to express their desperation over it, the people of Tibet have been driven to carry out a total of 154 protest self-immolations from the year 2009 till about the end of 2019. But the leaders of the government of China have remained totally unmoved by such a tragic turn of event in terms of moving towards the resolution of the Sino-Tibetan dispute. On the contrary, it moved to cover up the real situation in Tibet by taking recourse to subterfuge and deceit with all manners lies before the Chinese public as well as the international community. Besides, it has kept spreading the canard about Tibet being an integral part of China since ancient times on numerous occasions. Recently, when the novel coronavirus infection began to spread from the city of Wuhan in Hubei Province, the government of China sought to conceal the true information about the epidemic with regard to the number of people sickened by it as well as the number of those who had died from it. This was nothing new as it was fully in keeping with the accustomed normal practice of the leaders of the communist Chinese government, a fact too well known to everyone by now. The truth concerning Tibet is that it was never a part of China at any time in its history, nor was it under the dominion of any other country. Rather, it was a totally independent country in terms of its history, territoriality, ethnicity, language, customs, and mores, whether compared to China or any other country. These bear stark testimony to the status of Tibet as a separate nation in its own right.

It is unfortunate that the government of China does not have any intention even now to change its entrenched hardline policy on Tibet. This is borne out by fact that in the afternoon of the 26th of November in 2019, a tragic incident took place in the nomadic township of Meruma in Ngawa County of the traditional Tibetan province of Amdo (but now part of China's Sichuan

Province) when Yonten, a Tibetan man, aged about 24 years old, died after he immolated himself in protest against the Chinese government's current hardline policy in Tibet. It is also borne out by the fact that Tibetan people in Tibet continue to remain deprived of their freedom of speech and expression, with their freedom of religious belief being continued to be ignored and trampled upon. Besides, the Tibetan people continue to be subjected to all manners of policies of ethnic discrimination. In total violation of its own laws, Chinese authorities have remained unrelenting in subjecting the Tibetan people to arrest and imprisonment under various types of campaign actions. For example, a number of Tibetan people have been arrested for the sole reason that they had expressed their personal opinions or posted or forwarded pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama over the online social media platforms. More than 7000 monks and nuns were forced out by being expelled from the largest Tibetan Buddhist study center of Yarchen Gar in Palyul County of what is now part of China's Sichuan Province. Likewise, from the Larung Gar Tibetan Buddhist study center too in Serta County of what is now part of China's Sichuan Province, thousands of monks and nuns were previously expelled by Chinese authorities, after which greatly reduced limits were set on the numbers of new enrolments. In January this year, the government of China declared what was called "Regulations on the Establishment of a Model Area for Ethnic Unity and Progress in the Tibet Autonomous Region", containing eight parts and 48 articles, to be implemented from the first day of May this year. These regulations pose a mortal danger to the Tibetan people's unique religious and cultural heritage, language, fine traditions and customs and so on, which are symbolic of our rich existential identity. The whole purpose is to assimilate the Tibetan people into the fabric of the Chinese mold. Also, recently, the Chinese government made an announcement that it would invite for enrolment in a clandestine manner a political list of Tibetans in exile desirous of returning to their homeland. The obvious underlying objective of this nefarious move is to

weaken the strength of the cohesiveness of the Tibetan community in exile and to try to hoodwink the Tibetan people into allying with the government of China. Furthermore, the government of China has especially targeted the Tibetan people as well as its other so-called ethnic minorities, religious persons, and religious believers among the ordinary masses to exercise tight controls by making use of new modern technologies such especially as artificial intelligence. In particular, for this year of 2020, China has launched a campaign trying to strengthen a nationwide social governance system by employing the artificial intelligence technology to monitor every aspect of its citizens' movement in order to greatly tighten supervisory control over their activities. These things make obvious the true nature of the communist government of China. In this period of the twenty-first century, the prevalence of violence aimed at inflicting harm on others makes it impossible to bring peace and harmony in this world. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the supreme leader of Tibet, has time and again referred to this situation in this world and provided timely advisories designed to remedy the situation. Given this reality, the government of China too should adapt to the requirements of the time and take into consideration the imperative to respect people's freedom and human rights, and for this purpose change its hardline policy. Were it able to do that, it is certain that the people of all the nationalities in mainland China will especially be able to enjoy a life of peace and happiness, free of anxieties, and this will lead to the establishment of an opportunity for a similar kind of life to people throughout the rest of the world too. We therefore emphatically request the government of China to change its current hardline policy in favour of one that is liberal and not designed to harm others but, rather, which is based on non-violence and compassion as a long term vision and goal.

The nature of the Tibetan struggle is resolutely based on the creed of peace and non-violence and the policy of the middle way and there is no way this will ever change. This is the basis on which

the Central Tibetan Administration has been striving to reach a negotiated solution on the Sino-Tibetan dispute with the government of the People's Republic of China. This is mutually beneficial to China and Tibet, does not harm either side and will ensure peace. It is, therefore, the best possible approach for resolving the dispute. It is for this reason that governments, parliaments, governmental bodies and non-governmental setups, as well as Tibet support groups in countries across the world such as the United States of America, European countries, India and others as well as international bodies and private individuals, have continued to offer praises as well as support for this approach adopted by the Tibetan side. Likewise, large numbers of Chinese intellectuals and democracy activists living in foreign countries, as well as non-biased Chinese intellectuals living in the People's Republic of China, have continuously expressed admiration and praise for the approach adopted by the Tibetan side. In this connection, it is worthwhile noting that in many countries across the world, including the United Nations, official resolutions and motions for discussion expressing support for a just resolution of the issue of Tibet have been adopted on successive occasions. To cite a section of these by way of example on this occasion, in the year 2018, the United States of America adopted a Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act. Likewise, on the 28th of January in 2019, the House of Representatives, the Lower Chamber of the United States Congress, passed a legislative measure called Tibetan Policy and Support Act 2019 by supermajority votes of its members. On the 23rd of November in 2019, Representative Ted Yoho, Representative Michael McCaul, Representative Chris Smith, and Representative Jim McGovern of the US House of Representatives introduced a new resolution in the House, "Recognizing the significance of the genuine autonomy of Tibet and the Tibetan people and the work His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama has done to promote global peace, harmony, and understanding". It emphasized the cultural and religious significance of a genuinely Autonomous Tibet for all

of the Tibetan people and commended His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama for his commitment to global peace and nonviolence and peaceful solutions to international conflicts.

Again, just recently, on the 6th of February this year, in the presence of the United States President Donald Trump, a short documentary was screened during the 68th annual National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, DC, held in the Washington Hilton, highlighting China's restrictions on and even destruction of religious freedom in Tibet and at which former political prisoner in Chinese ruled Tibet Golog Jigme was among the special guests. And at that national prayer breakfast gathering, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi expressed thanks to the thousands of people who had come to voice their support for the millions of "the poor and the persecuted" who continued to remain persecuted, disappeared and executed due to their love for religious freedom and practice. "Let us pray for the Panchen Lama and all the Tibetan Buddhists in prison in China or missing for following their faith," she said.

For three days from the 3rd to the 5th of October in 2019, the Third Tibetan Special General Meeting was held in accordance with the provisions of Article 59 of the Charter of Tibetans in Exile at which delegates representing all sections of the Tibetan people referred to "the utmost trust and devotion the Tibetans held for His Holiness as the ultimate spiritual guide for this life and the next". And the meeting unanimously resolved, that "no nation, government, entity or any individual can claim to recognise the reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, The final authority on decisions regarding the reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama rests indisputably and completely with His Holiness the Dalai Lama himself and the concerned authorities of the Gaden Phodrang Trust." The resolution also "categorically rejected any interference of the Chinese government in the selection process of Tibetan reincarnate lamas as unacceptable and outrightly rejected Order No. 5 of 2007 issued by the Chinese government which states that

reincarnations of tulkus and lamas must be approved by the Chinese government for legal validation." For three days from the 27th to the 29th of November in 2019, the 14th Tibetan Religious Conference has held at Dharamshala at which top Tibetan religious leaders appealed "for the continuation of the institution and reincarnation of the Dalai Lama in the future" and supplicated to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama accordingly. They reaffirmed that "the authority of decision concerning the way and the manner in which the next reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama should appear solely rests with His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama himself. No government or otherwise will have such authority." In addition, the religious leaders stressed that "regarding the method of recognizing the future reincarnations of the Dalai Lama, the same unique Tibetan traditional method, which has been continuously used until now, will be followed. This method conforms to the basic philosophy and tenets of the Buddhadharma and originated in Tibet over 800 years ago." The special resolution was passed with unanimous support from all the gathered Tibetan religious leaders.

Pursuant to the above two major resolutions, Sam Brownback, the United States Ambassador at large for international religious freedom said during his visit to Dharamshala in October 2019 that the United States government held in high regards the Tibetan religion, culture, and language, and that the Tibetan culture was a "treasure of humanity" and China's attempts to destroy it "are an affront to the civilized world." He stressed that the relationship between the United States and the Tibetan people has been growing in strength year by year, and that "the international community must work together now to make clear we stand unequivocally with the people of Tibet." And he also said that the reincarnation system, is a unique tradition of the Tibetan people, should be carried out in full accord with the Tibetan Buddhist customs. He expressed the United States government's full support for the above resolutions which stressed, "The role of picking a successor to the Dalai Lama

belongs to the Tibetan Buddhist system, the Dalai Lama, and other Tibetan leaders. It does not belong to anybody else, not any government or any entity." He thus expressed his government's support for the Tibetan people's right to freely determine the reincarnations of their religious leaders without any interference from external forces.

Elsewhere, there have been moves in several countries, including in the United Kingdom, to introduce resolutions or hold discussions in parliaments, calling for legislative measures for ensuring reciprocal access to Tibet. Besides, in many other countries that support the fundamental cause of the Tibetan people, there have been a substantial number of discussions on the issue of Tibet held in their respective parliaments. These show that in many major countries of the world, especially in the United States of America, there is an even greater amount of concern and support for the issue of Tibet. We take this opportunity to appeal to these countries to continue their efforts to extend support to us in whatever way they can.

From the 7th to the 10th of May in 2019, the Seventh World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet was held in Riga, capital of the Baltic republic of Latvia, an event organized by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. About one hundred delegates of prominent persons, including members of parliaments of a number of countries, took part in the meeting. During that meeting, a Riga Declaration was adopted, with the main focus on the fundamental issue of Tibet in general and with a special focus on the environmental situation of the Tibetan Plateau. A Riga Action Plan was also adopted, outlining future courses of campaign actions on the issue of Tibet. Likewise, for three days, from the 3rd to the 5th of November in 2019, the Eighth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups was held at Dharamshala, the seat of the Central Tibetan Administration. More than 180 delegates representing Tibet Support groups from some 42 countries took part in the meeting and issued a declaration on the issue of Tibet. Through meetings and conferences such as these,

continuous efforts have been made to strengthen international support for the issue of Tibet while publicity efforts directed at achieving the same objective have also been made. And the resultant supports achieved from these endeavors have been significant and encouraging.

One thing the new generation of today needs to understand is that until Tibet was invaded, occupied and annexed in its entirety by the communist-ruled People's Republic of China in the year 1959, Tibet was a fully independent country. However, the government of China has always sought to cover up this reality by misleading both the international community and its own people by fabricating tales about Tibet being an integral part of China since ancient times by engaging in all sorts of theatrics and false propaganda efforts designed only to deceive. However, people in the international community who value and support truth and justice have been steadfast in refusing to believe the Chinese government's lies and make-believe theatrics on the issue of Tibet. On the struggle for the just cause of Tibet, the Tibetan people living in exile led by the Central Tibetan Administration and through governmental entities as well as non-governmental organizations, as well as the entirety of the general Tibetan public have, on the basis of the kindness and generosity of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, as well as the sincerity of purpose and resoluteness of determination of the Tibetan people in Tibet, devoted their utmost attention and commitment. This is the basis on which we have all carried out our bounden duty as a result of which the struggle of the Tibetan people has endured and continues to remain vibrant thus far. We, therefore, feel it pertinent to emphatically call on the entire Tibetan people standing on their feet to contribute their lot in whatever way they can in a cooperative manner to the struggle under the leadership of the Central Tibetan Administration so that the just cause of Tibet may come to prevail in the near future.

These days, not an insignificant number of Tibetan people are seen to spend much of their precious time on voice chats, Facebook and other social

media platforms. On occasions, these social media platforms are seen being used to create disturbances within the Tibetan community on the pretext of differences based on provincial and sectarian considerations. Such kinds of activities sowing discord with the Tibetan community are seen to be continuing without an end. In view of this situation, we take the opportunity provided by this occasion to urge the general Tibetan public not to waste their precious time and instead realize the imperative to direct their efforts towards their career prospects and for the future of the Tibetan cause. At the same time, it does not bear pointing out the fact, since it is all too obvious to all of us, that the Tibetan people are the rightful owners of the Tibetan nation, which means that each and every Tibetan individual has a duty to contribute towards realizing it. In keeping with what His Holiness the Dalai Lama has every now and then, and on repeated occasions, advised us, we should ensure that there is no let down in our constant efforts to teach and learn our language and religious knowledge if we are not to lose our ethnic identity. The government of China continues to be unrelenting in implementing "a hundred methods and a thousand strategies" in its malicious design to obliterate the religious and cultural identity of the Tibetan people. Nevertheless, by dint of the unvanquished sincerity of purpose and determination of the Tibetan people in Tibet; by the blessings of the kindness of Tibet's supreme leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama; and thanks to the gratitude owed to our elder generations, those who show concern for the Tibetan people and extend support to us keep growing enormously from all across the world.

Over the past more than two months, we have been witnessing a saddening development in the form of the spread of the novel coronavirus epidemic Covid-19 which originated in the Chinese city of Wuhan, which also reached Tibet, and which still continues to spread to many countries across the world. This is a global emergency situation and the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile wishes to express its concern for and empathy with the affected countries



and peoples. It is estimated as a serious danger that this epidemic is likely to spread to more than half the world. We accordingly urge people across the world to exercise the utmost care and caution on this unfolding epidemic. China failed to take timely steps to close the network of transport services from Wuhan city, the epicenter of the novel coronavirus infection that broke out in early December 2019, to Tibet, with the result that it exposed the Tibetan people to serious risks of falling victim to the deadly new virus. This is because the virus could easily spread in Tibet where medical facilities are particularly poor, not at all comparable to those available in China. It is extremely saddening in this context that in the Tibetan county of Tawu, the infection is spreading rapidly from day to day. Tibet is under China's occupation rule; so the government of China has the responsibility to ensure that the novel coronavirus infection does not spread among the Tibetan people. It

must, therefore, extend the equal level of protection and help the Tibetan people against the viral infection and we urge the World Health Organization to instruct the government of China accordingly. We also appeal to the government of China to strive to bring the epidemic to an end at the earliest possible moment.

In keeping with the developing trend in the urgency of the need to address the tragic situation in Tibet today, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile maintains an ongoing agenda of campaigns of appeals to governments of India and other countries across the world and, likewise, to prominent public figures as well as the general public in order to bring international pressure on the government of China on the issue of Tibet. On behalf of all Tibetans in and outside Tibet, the Tibetan parliament takes this opportunity to offer heartfelt gratitude to government leaders, members of parliaments, organizations

and private individuals, but especially to the Indian central and state governments and people, for extending facilities and assistance by every possible means to the Central Tibetan Administration and the Tibetan people in general in this critical moment of existential threats to the survival of the Tibetan national as well as civilizational identity.

Finally, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile prays that His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the spiritual lord of the three world realms and a champion of world peace, may live for a hundred eons, that all his wishes may be seen fulfilled with utmost spontaneity, that the just cause of Tibet may be seen to prevail with indubitable certainty.

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile

10 March 2020

## CTA orders work from home for 50 percent staff, public urged to telephone/email their concerns

In accordance to the guidance issued by the Ministry of Personnel and Public Grievances, Government of India and the Himachal Pradesh State Government, the Central Tibetan Administration has ordered work from home for 50 percent of its employees with immediate effect.

This guideline is put in place to prevent workplace exposures to COVID-19.

Members of the public in and around Dharamshala are advised to observe the curfew currently in effect and therefore, avoid physical contacts and appearances at the CTA headquarters unless absolutely necessary.

In order to provide seamless communication and help to the members of public who are seeking to contact the departments and offices of CTA, contact directory of the main offices and departments are provided here.

We once again encourage the public to communicate their concerns via telephone, emails and observe social distancing until further instruction.

### Contact details of Departments and Offices of CTA in Dharamshala

Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission      tsjc@tibet.net      01892-225099

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 (+91) 9882327823 – Administration  
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Kashag Secretariat      kadrung@tibet.net      01892-222218, 222713, 223546

Election Commission      election@tibet.net      (+91) 8351972792

Public Service Commission      psc@tibet.net      (+91) 7018945877

Office of Auditor General      oag@tibet.net      01892-222211, 226232

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Department of Education      Education@tibet.net (+91) 9816563849  
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## Supporting the PM CARES Fund: His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

In a letter to the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, His Holiness the Dalai Lama expressed his support for his efforts to control the growing threat of the coronavirus, which has also reached India as it spreads across the world.

“I appreciate the enormous challenges that this crisis poses to the world community and the need for strict measures to be taken to meet them,” he wrote. “I would like to thank you for the initiative that you have taken in partnership with other SAARC countries to set up an emergency fund and to exchange information, knowledge and expertise to tackle the spread of Covid-19. Such collaboration will also create a model for dealing with similar problems in the future.

“As a token of my sympathy and support, I am making a donation from the Dalai Lama Trust to the PM CARES Fund set up to provide relief during crises such as this.

“I would also like to mention that



members of my Office Staff would also like to contribute one day's salary to the Fund.

“As I have stated elsewhere, I understand that as a result of the necessary lockdowns across the world, many people are facing tremendous hardship due to a loss of livelihood. For those with no stable income in particular, it is becoming very hard to make ends

meet. I hope, therefore, that charitable trusts such as the PM CARES Fund will be able to provide these people with urgently needed assistance.”

In conclusion, His Holiness affirmed his confidence in the steps being taken by the Central Government and prayed that they will be effective in containing the spread of the virus.

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### President Dr Sangay's Press Briefing on Coronavirus Prevention

CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay gave a press briefing on the latest measures rolled out by the Central Tibetan Administration to effectively curb the spread of the coronavirus.

In addition to the guidelines issued by CTA in Tibetan monasteries, schools and elder care homes in India, Nepal and Bhutan, as well as for CTA workforce at Central and Regional offices, the President announced a set of stringent instructions and health reminders for the public.

Firstly, he advised all Tibetans in India to refrain from travelling within or across the states especially in Himachal Pradesh where the lockdown is in effect. All the Tibetans across India are urged to abide by the instructions issued by the respective state governments.

“All Tibetans who are seeking to enter Himachal Pradesh from other states or countries must be informed that the Government of Himachal Pradesh has already sealed the borders in order to contain the spread of the COVID-19 disease and any inter-state or intra-state movements are strictly prohibited,” said the President.

“Any person found violating this order shall be punished as per the relevant provisions under the law.”

Secondly, as part of the Central Government's social distancing measures, President Sangay announced that work-from-home mandate has been put in effect at the CTA headquarters.

This new measure follows the guidance issued by the Ministry of Personnel and Public Grievances, Government of India

and of the HP Govt that “50 percent of Group B and Group C employees are required to attend office every day, and the remaining 50 percent of staff should be instructed to work from home. Working hours of the employees should be altered. Central government officials, who will be working from home on a particular day as per the roster drawn up, should be available on telephone and electronic means of communications at all times. They should attend office if called for any exigency work”.

Thirdly, the President said Tibetans in and around Dharamshala who are seeking to approach the CTA headquarters with any concerns must do so through call or email. With the lockdown in effect, all the Tibetans are asked to avoid physical contacts and appearances at the CTA headquarters unless absolutely necessary.

The public is encouraged to communicate their concerns via telephone, emails and a complete contact directory of the CTA offices is provided here to facilitate a hassle-free communication.

Addressing the public confusion regarding the lockdown in Kangra and whether or not it implies a complete closure, President Sangay clarified that government offices at both central and district are operating at 50 percent staff capacity under the new work-from-home guideline.

“The offices of CTA will also operate under the same guidelines until further instructions,” he said.

However, he made clear that public places will remain closed and inter-state and intrastate movements will remain

suspended as per the State government's instructions, adding that any person found violating this order shall be punished as per the relevant provisions under the law.

On a more worrying note, the President said there have been found two confirmed cases of COVID-19 infections in Kangra and alerted the Tibetan community to take utmost precautions and observe strict social distancing and isolation until the pandemic spread is contained.



Social distancing, Dr Sangay said is currently the best defence against this highly contagious disease.

“We've all seen the horrendous situation in Italy. 7 weeks ago, the number of positive cases was at 3, as of now, there are 60,000 infected people and more than 5000 casualties.”

“Preventing the spread of coronavirus is a matter of social responsibility that falls upon each one of us,” he said. “Take it seriously because it's absolutely crucial.”

India as the world's second-most populous nation has so far avoided the worst of the coronavirus pandemic, with its community transmission still at a lower rate, and most affected cases found to have carried the infection from affected countries.

However, over the weekend, the number of cases saw a sudden increase, prompting various states' authorities to impose a lockdown in 80 cities and districts across the country until March 31.

Following the robust steps taken by the Central and State GOI in tackling the pandemic, CTA has also issued a series of guidelines for the Tibetan community in India, Nepal and Bhutan; its central and regional offices and also instructed all to follow the order and directives issued by the host government and state authorities.



### CTA President condoles first Tibetan death from Wuhan-coronavirus, appeals public to comply to law enforcement

President Dr Lobsang Sangay addressed the press on the death of the first exile Tibetan infected by Wuhan-origin, Covid-19 in Dharamshala.

As he expressed his condolences and sadness over the death of the first Tibetan infected with the Wuhan virus, President Dr Sangay also said there are certain important issues for public knowledge and at the same time, clarified the events that transpired in view of the alarming concern and worry amongst the Tibetan community.

The details as briefed by the President are as follows:

The deceased Mr Tenzin Choephel, aged 69 had arrived from the US with his spouse on 15 March at 3 am in Delhi. After taking his temperature reading at the airport, he checked in a hotel in Majnu-ka-Tilla where he stayed for 5 days. At the time, many parts of Delhi were shut down, so the hotels were also vacant. The deceased left for Dharamshala on 21 March morning and reached at 6 pm, where he retired for the day.

The following day which coincided with the Janta curfew, he was taken to Balaji hospital due to deteriorating health including fever. The family had believed it was due to declining health as he was susceptible to flu and had suffered recurrent bouts of pneumonia. At Balaji hospital, the health staff suspected coronavirus infection and referred him to the Tanda hospital. He was being hospitalised and tested at Tanda when he passed away. Preliminary test results showed he had contracted the virus and was registered in the government record.

The local authorities and CM office contacted the Kalon Karma Yeshi, Department of Finance, CTA who then apprised President Dr Sangay.

The President immediately convened

a meeting with the Kalons of Health, Home and Security to decide the necessary steps pertaining to the safe and proper cremation, putting the family on quarantine and gathering related information.



At the instruction of the DC office, CTA administration had arranged to remove the body from the hospital. As per Dr Sangay's request, Delek hospital provided the ambulance service. After discussion with the family members, it was agreed that it would be most appropriate to perform cremation at the soonest. The family had also expressed their willingness to not cause any harm to the public and do what's best in the interest of others in the community. The DC office, SDM, Tibetan settlement office and local authorities fully assisted in the proper cremation of the deceased.

The cremation took place little past midnight and lasted till 1.45 am. At 2.20 am three members of the family ie son, wife and mother were quarantined at the Tibetan Reception Centre at Khanyara.

While the removal of the body from the hospital and cremation was performed safely with least public contact, President Sangay said there's a family who had come in contact with the deceased when they were travelling from Delhi to Dharamshala in separate taxis and the taxi drivers as well.

Dr Sangay said the family had been notified and instructed to self-quarantine.

One of the drivers of the two taxis was



identified and notified by the SP office while they are still trying to find the other driver.

In Delhi, the necessary information regarding the hotel where the deceased stayed has been apprised to the Delhi government by the Settlement Office and the Bureau of HH the Dalai Lama and necessary action are being taken.

“We have determined from discussions with the DC, unless contradictory information appears later, as of now, due to the coincidence of the curfew the deceased and his family had no contact with other people,” President Dr Sangay said in the briefing.

He said the DC has also conveyed strongly to urge all Tibetans to abide by the lockdown and not step out of their homes to ensure the prevention. It was also instructed that in case individuals broke the curfew and faced punishment, the CTA would not intervene.

In this regard, President Dr Sangay appealed to the public to follow the guidelines and be cooperative during door-step interrogations and investigations by the police while collecting data on probable exposure.

“India is extremely kind to us, it is the second home to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the CTA and largest Tibetan community, therefore as Tibetans, we must do all we can to facilitate the efforts and take collective responsibility in the battle against this pandemic,” he said.

The President urged the Tibetans in India to keep stationed wherever they are in this lockdown until further notice.

A Taskforce to deal with this pandemic had been established consisting of the Health Kalon, veteran doctors and former personal physicians to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Dr Tsetan and Dr Tamding who are overseeing the situation. The committee would hold discussions on the matter of probable rise in cases across the Tibetan community.

President Sangay also assured Tibetans of the concern that the former physicians

of His Holiness would not see any patients for the time being as this disease is on the rise.

“Gaden Phodrang is also temporarily closed as His Holiness’s wellbeing is paramount and as such, all the staff and his personal physicians are taking every care in that regard,” he said.

“Be cautious and safe. Keep elder members of family in separate quarters as a preventive measure and take every step to ensure prevention of this disease.”

“To Tibetans around the world, especially those inside Tibet, we are doing the utmost in our efforts to combat it and urge your sincere cooperation,” the President ended his remarks.

In the briefing, Dr Sangay also gave a brief profile of the deceased, describing him as a longtime public servant who dedicated his service in many Tibetan organizations and the CTA as well.

“So I request the public, on the demise of this public figure, pray for his rebirth as a Tibetan and a public servant devoted to the cause of Tibet,” said the CTA President.

Tenzin Choephel was a former officer at the Election Commission of Central Tibetan Administration. He has also served in the local assembly and Tibetan Youth Congress and have actively been involved in the political and social service throughout his life.



### Kashag appeals CTA functionaries and Tibetans worldwide to contribute to Coronavirus relief funds

Kashag has issued an appeal urging CTA functionaries across the world including the Offices of Tibet, Settlement offices and income-earning individuals to donate towards the respective state and district COVID-19 relief fund.

In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic and government lockdown in India, normal business activity has come to a standstill and has hit hardest the livelihoods of millions of people especially the livelihoods of daily wage earners.



Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in Bylakuppe donated a total of Rs. 2.5 lakh to the Prime Minister and Chief Minister’s Relief funds and also distributed 1 month’s dry ration and protective masks to over 182 needy Indian families and local police.

Kashag has urged Tibetan communities in India and abroad to support the initiatives of the host government in providing relief to those worst affected by the coronavirus pandemic by making voluntary contributions to the state and district relief funds.

A number of Tibetan settlement offices are coming forward and are doing their part by donating to the relief fund created by the local government. Tibetans from Shillong led by the Settlement Office donated Rs 30,000 to their CM’s Relief Fund, in solidarity with the fellow residents affected by the crisis.

Tibetans from the settlements of Bir, Chauntra & Lily collectively donated a sum of INR 4,22,010 (four lakhs twenty-



Gyang Khang Chotrul Rinpoche presents donation of Rs 10 lakh towards Karnataka CM relief fund.

two thousand and ten rupees) to the Himachal CM’s Relief Fund and the Red Cross Society’s Fund.

Tibetan Buddhist communities have also come forward to donate to their local government’s relief fund.

HE the 42nd Sakya Trinzin, HE Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, Dolma Phodrang Society, Ngor Pal Ewam Chodan, Sakya College, The Great Sakya Monlam Foundation, Sakya Nunnery, and Sakya Centre donated a total of 23 lakhs rupees to the Uttarakhand CM relief fund.

Menri Monastery in Dolanji led by the 34th Menri Trizin Rinpoche donated a total of five lakh rupees towards PM Cares Fund and Himachal Pradesh COVID-19 Response Fund.

Namdroling Monastery in Bylakuppe, South India donated 10 lakh to Karnataka CM relief fund and Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, also in Bylakuppe, donated a total of Rs. 2.5 lakh to the Prime Minister and Chief Minister’s Relief funds and distributed 1 month’s dry ration and protective masks to over 182 needy Indian families and local police.

The show of solidarity was well received by the local Indian community. Local news channels such as Live Times TV, Star of Mysore and HP 24 reported the initiatives taken up by the Tibetans.



### CTA Press Briefing on Coronavirus | 16 April 2020

Following PM Modi’s official announcement to extend the nationwide lockdown till 3 May, President Dr Lobsang Sangay of the Central Tibetan Administration today urged all the Tibetans to render support and cooperation in maintaining the discipline and above all urged them to adhere strictly to the directions issued by the Government of India.

President was addressing the situation of Tibetans worldwide dealing with COVID-19. President notified that approximately 100 Tibetans are said to have contracted the virus of which he clarified that many of them have been cured.

President commended the members of CTA’s Task Force committee on COVID-19, emergency response

informed that Himachal Pradesh has been excluded from the list. In addition, he informed that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is in excellent health and assures the public not to worry.

“So far, no cases of COVID-19 have been found among the staff of CTA. We are committed to doing the work that needs to be done,” said President Sangay.

Despite the lock-down ends on 3 May or not, President advised Tibetans to continue social distancing and to avoid unnecessary travel even if the restriction is lifted off sooner or later.

“If one confirmed case is found within our community, it could potentially wreak havoc to the rest of the communities,” he notified.



(Left to Right) DoHe, Secretary Mr. Palden Dhondup, Health Kalon Choekyong Wangchuk, Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, DOH Secretary Mr. Tsewang Dolma, DIIR Secretary Mr. Arya Tsewang Gyalpo

committee and staff of the Health Department led by Health Kalon Choekyong Wangchuk for maintaining stability within the community while keeping the public well informed.

Speaking at the press briefing, President mentioned that the government of India has released a classified list of all the red-zone districts (districts that have recorded a maximum number of coronavirus positive cases) and

Meanwhile, President Dr. Sangay via the briefing applauded the services being offered by the Tibetans in South India including the monasteries to the needy and underprivileged locals in the supply of essentials. He also applauded the contributions and donations made by Tibetan individuals and organisations towards respective state and district COVID-19 relief fund.

Kalon for Department of Health,



Choekyong Wangchuk in his remarks attributed the stable, coronavirus-free situation in Tibetan communities to the constant support and guidance of the Central, State and District Government. He expressed heartfelt thanks and gratitude.

He also acknowledged the close-knit cooperation among the branch units of the Health department, Delek Hospital and Mentsee Khang across India in driving the key initiatives for safeguarding people against the coronavirus.

Under his leadership, a task force committee was formed on 19 March presided by the Kalon, personal physicians to His Holiness the Dalai Lama Dr Tsetan Dorjee Sadutshang and Dr Tsewang Tamdin. The committee comprises of doctors from both Delek hospital and Mentsee Khang and heads of various divisions of the health department.

Over 11 task force meetings have been convened to date. On 31 March, a special emergency response committee led by Secretaries of the seven departments was established. The response committee has convened on more than 3 occasions in the presence of President Dr Sangay.

In total, more than 17 to 18 meetings have been convened among the executive members to develop a cohesive action plan for the CTA headquarters as well as for the Tibetan settlements across India, Nepal and Bhutan.

Kalon Choekyong Wangchuk also reviewed the steps taken within the various divisions of the health department to prepare and tackle the pandemic.

From March-end, as proposed in the response plan, eight special divisions focussed on tackling coronavirus was formed and the staff of the department were charged with these responsibilities. They have been working round the clock to offer all the required services.

The eight special divisions focus on ensuring the welfare of the elderly, others who are vulnerable including youth and children. A tele-counselling service has been initiated to help them. Others include deploying medical equipments and essential requirements for the branch hospitals and evaluating the day to day status of the Tibetan settlements and issuing guidance from time to time.

Health Secretary Palden Dhondup provided a detailed report on the steps taken in response to the outbreak through the 8 special divisions.

The first division is led by professional nurses who evaluate the status on infections in the community. Over 1151 Tibetans are currently under quarantine and are being monitored for symptoms by the nurses. Those who show no signs of the virus after the incubation period are released from the quarantine to return safely to their homes.

Secondly, as a long term response measure, preparations are underway to convert the community quarantine centres in various settlements to COVID-19 Management centres. The COVID-29 Management Centre will be activated to tackle potential new infections that may be expected after the lockdown period and travels around the world resumes in full force.

Testing for fever and flu-like symptoms have been conducted successfully in all settlements by the concerned health officials. A committee has been charged with assisting and providing support to the quarantine centres in the settlements by establishing channels with the district and state government centres. As of now, more than 36 Tibetan settlements have been officially registered with the local authority bodies.

More than 70 percent of Tibetan Health units in the settlements are well-equipped with personal protective equipment (PPE). In the coming week, the Secretary said, the situation will get better and PPEs will be available in all units.

Health Secretary also briefed on the arrangements of ambulance and emergency use vehicles, youth volunteers to assist settlement offices in cases of emergency situations.

CTA Information Secretary, TG Arya in his address, spoke about the efforts of the Department of Information in disseminating CTA's precautionary measures and guidance to the public. He shared that these efforts were well received by the public.

He added that the news websites of Tibet.net and Bod.asia carry daily updates and information concerning the situation and added that email subscriptions are also available. They are also available for download on android and apple systems.

He urged people to follow these websites for news on the Education department's initiatives eg, online learning materials and pointed out that COVID-19 helpline is available for those who need guidance in their respective regions.

He informed that the Department of Information was in contact with representatives of Tibetan communities based abroad and they have reached out to regional MPs to inform them of the situation in Tibetan communities and are seeking government aid.

He then gave guidance on visa extension and explained that visa validity is authorised by the immigration officer at the airport after arrival in India, which is issued for the duration of 1, 2 or at the most 6 months. In case of visa expiration, the settlement office's FRRO must be contacted and its link: [www.indianfrro.gov.in/frro](http://www.indianfrro.gov.in/frro) where all the necessary details are provided.

"If you need to return to your country urgently before the lockdown is lifted, then contact your government representative. Many countries like the US and France are making arrangements for their citizens stranded in the lockdown", said Mr Arya.

Home Secretary, Ms Tsewang Dolma, in her address, described the 5 main

initiatives taken by the Department of Home to fight the crisis and its impact.

She listed them as 1) Providing care for the elderly people as the highest concern. 2) Elderly and those living without the help of spouse or children. 3) general public 4) Tibetans from abroad who have come to visit and are stranded due to the travel restrictions and 5) Settlers/ Indian neighbours.

In terms of providing elderly care, Secretary Tsewang Dolma explained that a total of 24 old age homes- 14 under the CTA and 10 NGOs are being included under the initiative. The Department of Home is overseeing the wellbeing of over 763 elderly people.

Secondly, she said, there are a total of 180 persons who are entirely dependent on CTA aid and for those, monthly monetary aid, a policy which has been in place for 10 years, is set to increase. While previously those in the age group between 65 to 89 received Rs 1500, it is now raised to Rs 2000 and those between the age group of 90 to 100 will increase from Rs 4500-7000.

Regarding general public, door to door sanitisation is being done across settlements in India under the guidance of the settlement offices. The settlement offices as well the Tibetan monasteries are actively contributing towards promoting the access to essential requirements in the respective regions. More and more Tibetans and monasteries and settlement offices have also come forward to contribute to the PM CARES fund, Chief Minister's relief fund as well as the District COVID-19 fund.

So far, no cases are reported from the 43 Tibetan settlements.

Lastly, in order to provide assistance to the Tibetans who are stranded in India due to the travel restrictions, the Department of Information and Security are working towards facilitating their visa extension. The settlement offices and Department of Health are also working on assisting them.

## Sikyong urges Tibetans to observe lockdown through May end to combat COVID-19 spread

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay gave an update on the situation of Tibetans affected by coronavirus worldwide and particularly in Tibet.

As per information collected from media reports before March 17, there were at least 866 COVID-19 cases across all regions of Tibet, out of which 106 were said to be Tibetans.

"Not even a single Tibetan death related to novel coronavirus was reported in Tibet. This is highly unlikely," Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay said today during a weekly press briefing.

Since it is quite possible that there may have been Covid-related deaths inside Tibet, Sikyong urged all to pray for all those who have been affected by this pandemic.

As for the Tibetans in the US, Sikyong said there are around 100 positive cases of which majority have been reported from the Tibetan community in New York. In New Jersey, he said five Tibetans have tested positive as he urged all Tibetans to take precautionary steps.

Likewise, Sikyong also notified of zero cases amongst Tibetans in India as of now. However, he pointed out not to take the current situation lightly and advised social distancing at all costs.

"Since 14 April, reported cases per day has crossed 1000 while yesterday it crossed 1500, which is indicative of a rise in the pandemic spread. Scientists are predicting that the disease will peak in the first and second weeks of May, and it is natural that it will not subside in the following weeks. May is also the harvesting and sowing season which means that farmers numbering 120 million and labourers numbering 140 million which combined is 260 million, will be out to work. Additionally, government lockdown is about to end and with business activity to resume,



social distancing for a 1200 million populous region is impossible. He, therefore, strongly urged Tibetans to continue to observe lockdown, despite the rest of the country coming out. He said that in the case of 1 detected case, the whole monastery, settlement, school, old age home will be closed and there will be a manifold increase in the pandemic toll.

With May also coinciding with the sacred Saka Dawa, he requested people to fast and pray in their homes. He also asked people to keep away from declared red-zones e.g., Delhi, Mysore, Bangalore, Mumbai and Kolkatta.

He assured people that quarantine facilities were available in settlements, with medical workers coming home to conduct routine check-ups. He also urged people with symptoms to contact a health worker urgently and check into a quarantine facility. In Dharamshala, the Tibetan Reception Centre is the designated quarantine facility with two separate wings called Norbulingka and Potala.

Lastly, he urged Tibetans to not read coronavirus news from social media which are not reliable sources of information, which also creates difficulties for the administration when Tibetans circulate it on social media. Instead, follow government-associated media on news about the pandemic.

In addition to his address on COVID-19, Sikyong offered his condolences on the demise of the former Justice Commissioner Lobsang Khedup Drongratsang, who had passed away



yesterday due to natural causes. He expressed his sadness at the demise of the dedicated and one of the longest-serving CTA officials. He gave a brief profile of the public servant whom he described as a dedicated public servant with 40 years of tenure who started out as a Settlement Officer and later worked as the Secretary of the Department of Religion and Culture. He served as Justice Commissioner before his retirement. Sikyong lauded his dedication to public service and his adherence to Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Sikyong urged people to pray for the highly esteemed public servant and expressed solidarity with the deceased's family. He added that an arrangement to hold mourning prayers on electronic media was being made on account of social distancing as regular protocols for mourning can not be observed in this scenario.

Education Kalon Dr Pema Yangchen who also addressed the briefing spoke about how the Education department is ensuring quality education for Tibetan students despite the schools being shut down due to the pandemic.

Education Kalon also announced relief money of Rs 5000 for 200 college students who are stranded in cities due to the lockdown.

To apply for the relief money, students are asked to contact Sonam Sangmo, Head of Scholarship and Sponsorship desk, DOE at 9882322797 and Tenzin Samdup at 7018111983 before 30 April.

DOE will also provide relief money of Rs 2000 for over 297 highschool students belonging to financially disadvantaged homes so they can equip themselves with internet services and access the resources online.

In response to the challenges of the current lockdown for the schools under its jurisdiction, the Department of Education has taken to digital tools to continue to provide quality education for the students from the safe distance of their homes.

It has launched daily online classes for class 6, 7 and 8 via Tibet TV. The classes are being conducted daily by experienced teachers of Upper TCV as per the scheduled arrangements.

DOE has reinvigorated its existent website <https://bodyiglobjong.com/teaching/> where primary school students and parents can avail all online learning resources and there are also dedicated youtube channels such as <https://www.youtube.com/user/sherigCTA/videos> for the benefit of the students.

For the students with limited internet access, the Education Department is making efforts in enabling the online classes through cable TV broadcast. Efforts are also being made to ensure uninterrupted learning for students of class 9 to 12.

Acknowledging the initiatives of Weekend Tibetan school teachers in Tibetan communities abroad, Kalon thanked them as many still continue to voluntarily teach students via social media despite the inconveniences of the lockdown.

Kalon concluded by urging students, parents and the public to maintain good hygiene, take special care of the elder members in the family and most importantly to observe the necessary guidelines on social distancing until the coronavirus pandemic subsides.

### Coronavirus pandemic; a Chinese Trojan horse to global hegemony

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has written today to the Chief Minister, Shri Jai Ram Thakur, to express his support for him in his efforts to control the growing threat of the corona-virus, which has spread across the world and has even broken out here in this state.

“Since Himachal Pradesh has been my home for almost 60 years,” he wrote, “I naturally feel an affinity for its people. Therefore, as a token of respect and sympathy, I am making a donation from the Gaden Phodrang Trust of the Dalai Lama to the Chief Minister’s Fund in order to contribute to providing essential supplies like food and medicine for the poor and needy members of the community.”



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with Himachal Chief Minister, Shri Jai Ram Thakur at His Holiness' residence, 1 February 2018. Photo/OHHDL

His Holiness concluded by expressing confidence that the steps being taken by the Central Government,

under the Honourable Prime Minister's firm leadership, will be effective in containing the spread of the virus.

### CTA launches month-long Global Advocacy Campaign on Panchen Lama's 31st Birthday



Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama turns 31 today. Held captive for the last 25 years by the Chinese authorities, Panchen Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's birthday will be marked in grief and concerns, just as each year. Tibetans around the world will reminisce the day with sorrow at the unknown fate of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, his parents and Chadrel Rinpoche who led the search committee for the 11th Panchen Lama.

As the legitimate representative of the six million Tibetans, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) launches a month-long global advocacy initiative through its Offices of Tibet. This global advocacy will be carried out from 25 April, the birthday of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, through 17 May, marking the 25th year of his enforced disappearance.

With the whole world spread under the jurisdiction of the 12 Offices of Tibet, the CTA aims to amplify the call for Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's release and for China to disclose verifiable information on his current well-being and whereabouts.

CTA President Dr Lobsang Sangay remarked, “As we celebrate Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's birthday, we also remember his disappearance for the last 25 years. To press on the Chinese government for his immediate release, the CTA has launched a global campaign demanding his immediate release. Unfortunately, because of the coronavirus pandemic which originated in Wuhan, we are not able to do the physical lobbying but we are doing

virtual lobbying all over the world. Mainly our Offices of Tibet around the world, in partnership with Tibet Support Groups and Tibetan Associations, will participate in month-long events all over the world from 25 April to 17 May, the day he disappeared or got kidnapped. We will have petitions submitted at various governments particularly to the United Nations and specifically to the Commission on Rights of Child, and Working Group on Enforced Disappearance in Geneva.”

While urging the United Nations to hold a hearing about the case of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and demand



his immediate release, President Sangay said, “I hope the Chinese government will pay heed to the global appeal and at least allow Gedhun Choekyi Nyima to be with his family members, to be

with the Tibetan community in Tibet. I want to thank our friends, Tibet Support Groups and Tibetan Associations around the world for participating in this effort. This is a case of human rights; this is a case of religious freedom, which are fundamental rights of the Tibetan people and humanity as a whole.”

The UN, EU & Human Rights Desk of the Department of Information & International Relations, CTA undertakes the month-long global advocacy campaign, including at the United Nations, to press China further on the case of the “missing” Panchen Lama and to sensitize the freedom-loving people across the world, including friends of Tibet, to stand in solidarity in this endeavour to free him.

To this day, the fate of Tibet's Panchen Gedhun Choekyi Nyima remains unknown. Concerns will linger on for as long as the Chinese government continues to arbitrarily detain and disappear Tibetan political prisoners, including Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, his parents and Chadrel Rinpoche.

Tibet has been under iron-fist control of China for over six decades now and generations of Tibetans have endured immense hardship at the hand of Chinese authorities. The Chinese government continues to be blatant in violating basic human rights and freedoms in Tibet. The repressive nature of the Chinese rule is best reflected by the series of self-immolations committed by ordinary Tibetans in the recent years, the enforced disappearance case of the 11th Panchen Lama, and the systematic human rights violations including religious repression suffered by the ordinary Tibetan population in Tibet on a daily basis.





## Panel discussion: Renewing global advocacy for the release of the 11th Panchen Lama

China abducted six-year-old Kunzik Gedhun Choekyi Nyima on 17 May 1995 from his home in Nagchu region of Central Tibet days following His Holiness the Dalai Lama identified him as the 11th Panchen Lama, the second highest spiritual authority in Tibetan Buddhism. Today he is recognized as the world's longest-held prisoners of conscience.

The enforced disappearance of the Panchen Lama for more than 2 decades not only symbolises China's egregious violation of the religious freedom of Tibetan Buddhists, but also a politically driven effort to undermine and control Tibetan Buddhism.

As the Tibetan Buddhist community once again celebrate his 31st birthday in absentia, the Central Tibetan Administration, Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, the exile seat of the missing Panchen Lama, Tibet Support Groups, world leaders and parliamentarians, international bodies for religious freedom and rights groups have renewed the call for his immediate release.

The President of Central Tibetan Administration Dr Lobsang Sangay, Abbot of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery Zeekyab Rinpoche, Sophie Richardson, China Director, Human Rights Watch, MP Arif Virani, Canada, Dr Tenzin Dorjee, Commissioner, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and President of International Campaign for Tibet, Matteo Meccaci came together for a live panel discussion on the case of the missing Panchen Lama and renewing global campaign for his release.

The discussion was hosted online by the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in Bylakuppe, on their Facebook account in keeping with the COVID-19 lockdown. The panel was moderated by Pema Tulotsang, Asia Officer, National Endowment for Democracy.



President Dr Lobsang Sangay, CTA joined by other panel speakers at the virtual online panel discussion organised by Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, Bylakuppe in observance of the 31st birthday of Panchen Gedhun Choekyi Nyima.

“Even though it is a day of celebration, however, unfortunately, the day also coincides with the 25 years of Gendun Choekyi Nyima's disappearance,” said Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay remarking on the day's significance while asserting that in the abduction of Gendun Choekyi Nyima, the Chinese government has denied his basic rights for 25 years in a row. Not only were the restrictions imposed on him but his family also had to suffer the injustice.

Despite the numerous appeals made by the Central Tibetan Administration, Tibet support groups, and Tibetan associations around the world to the U.N, the whereabouts of Panchen Lama is still not identified said Sikyong, and noted that even today the Panchen Lama case continues to remain tragic. Unarguably, the situation of Gendun Choekyi Nyima reflects the tragic reality in Tibet.

In his address, Sikyong also paid tribute to the 10th Panchen Lama and spoke on the 10th Panchen Lama describing him as one true patriot of the Tibetan cause.

In this particular reference, Sikyong highlighted that the 10th Panchen Lama was fearless, straightforward, and critical about the Chinese government's policies which are undeniably reflected in his 70,000 words petition against the

communist party leadership.

In the petition, explained Sikyong, the 10th Panchen Lama has highlighted in detail the number of monasteries destroyed, disrobement of monks and nuns, genocide of Tibetan culture, language, and identity, to name a few and argued that the report significantly repudiates China's narrative on Tibet. The petition submitted by the 10th Panchen Lama clearly indicates that the oppression of Tibetan people was a deliberate attempt and strategy on the part of the Chinese government to destroy the very existence of Tibetan civilization and identity. Because of this report, he was incarcerated till 1977 and suffered enormously in prison often in solitary confinement. All this is well recorded in the autobiography of Bawa Phuntsok Wangyal.

“For Tibetans, Panchen Lama is a highly revered figure and for him to go through such level of torment is really heartbreaking and therefore, we owe a great deal to him,” Sikyong said.

Meanwhile, he urged the younger generation of Tibetan people to always remember the great contribution of the 10th Panchen Lama while rallying to support the case of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima.

Lastly, Sikyong thanked the U.S State Department, and the governments around the world that have responded and issued statements pressing China to release Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. He appealed that the campaign demanding the immediate release of 11th Panchen Lama must continue so that he is soon united with his people and be able to play his spiritual role in the Tibetan Buddhist world.

Abbot of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, Zeekyab Rinpoche expressed grave concerns over the wellbeing of the Panchen Lama, as the Chinese government continues to refuse any reliable information on Rinpoches wellbeing even after 25 years

“Even after vigorous and continuous pressure on China by the devotees of the Panchen Lama, governments sensitive to human rights, NGOs and concerned individuals, the Chinese Government has turned a deaf ear. To the leaders around the world, NGO representatives and individuals who have met Chinese leaders to demand the release of the Panchen Lama, the Chinese government always parrots that he is well and living comfortably. But to this day, even after 25 years, they have failed to produce a single photograph of the Panchen Lama. Due to this stonewalling of the truth for such a long time, today it is a pertinent question whether the Panchen Lama is still alive or not?”

He sounded the urgency to give a clarion call for the immediate release of the Panchen Lama given the worsening state of situation and reluctance from the Chinese government.

“The CTA, Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, and sympathetic governments and NGOs have all collectively intensified their demands for the same. And, we will not rest until the issue is resolved!”. He concluded with prayers and strong resolve to bring the Panchen Lama to his rightful seat in Tibet and to his followers who await his safe return.

Sophie Richardson, China Director at Human Rights Watch spoke on the stance

of HRW in the case of the disappearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. Sophie vehemently asserted that the abduction and the consequent disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama was ‘longest-running’ and ‘most egregious’ human rights violations of a quarter-century-long enforced disappearance. In doing so, she stated reflects the Chinese government's extent to not only control the religion but to remake it to suit their political agenda.

“It is also an example of collective punishment not just for the Panchen Lama and his family but for Gyaltsen Norbu (Chinese elected Panchen Lama) and his family. Their lives were radically changed and their rights seriously violated essentially in order to control the appointment of the next Dalai Lama”, she attested.

She further explains that HRW is committed to continuing advocacy for Tibet just like it had for the last 25 years documenting serious human rights violations of Tibetan people including the forceful relocation of nomads, severe restrictions on community lives, and increasing restrictions on the religious activity.

In the meantime, she believes that it is also important that governments continue to pressurise Chinese authorities to free all of those Tibetans who have been unjustly detained including specifically the Panchen Lama.

Member of Canadian Parliament and Chair of Canadian Parliamentary Friends of Tibet Arif Virani, said, “At the time the world's youngest political prisoner having disappeared on May 1995, three days after His Holiness recognized him as the 11th Panchen Lama. As Sikyong mentioned, this May 17 will mark 25 years in detention which is 25 years too long.”

Drawing in on the gravity of the case, MP Arif Virani agreed that it is a grave situation, “of Nelson Mandela-like proportion at this stage which is an egregious stain on the international human rights record.”

The former Constitutional human rights lawyer and the member of Canadian parliament said he has spoken consistently about the Tibetan cause, Tibetan religious freedom, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Middle Way Approach and significantly raised the case of Panchen Lama in the Canadian parliament. He also participated in 2018 hearing at the Canadian Parliamentarians' Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs and International Development Foreign Affairs committee to question the Chinese delegation representing the Tibet Autonomous Region on the whereabouts of the Panchen Lama.

“The response I received is the simple response we have heard repeatedly since 2015 that Gedhun Choekyi Nyima is living a simple and normal life and he and his family do not wish to be disturbed,” he recalled.

Outlining Canada's track record of International advocacy since Panchen Lama's abduction in 1995, MP Virani said the Canadian government raised the case of Panchen Lama with the Chinese authorities in 1995 and have repeatedly sought from the Chinese government information on location, level of education and expected date of his return along with his parents. In 2014, Canada called to the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights and UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion to enable a visit to the Panchen Lama and addressed statements at the UNHRC criticizing China's persecution of religious and ethnic minorities “specifically in Xinjiang and Tibet”.

Speaking briefly on the ongoing persecution of both the Tibetan Buddhists and Uyghur Muslims, MP Virani stressed that a commonality needs to be reinforced in terms of the two ongoing religious persecution. “I say that as a Muslim Canadian, as a Muslim parliamentarian representing a lot of Tibetans and I say that during the month of Ramadan which we are now in.”

He ended his comments by expressing his personal commitment as a member of



parliament in Canada for the community of Parkdale—High Park and as Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Tibet Group, “to personally raise the issue of Tibet wherever or whenever possible.”

“Not just with regard to the whereabouts of Panchen Lama, but with regards to also promoting the basic religious and linguistic freedoms of Tibetans as well as the Middle Way Approach. Thuje Che and Kadrin Che!”

Dr Tenzin Dorjee, Commissioner of the USCIRF expressed sadness at the paradoxical situation that both Tibetans and the Panchen Lama wouldn't be able to celebrate his birthday while wishing him. He then spoke about his efforts as a USCIRF member where he adopted the Panchen Lama as a prisoner of conscience along with his colleagues VC Nadine Maenza and Congressman James McGovern. He added that he has been advocating for the Panchen Lama for 4 years demanding China to share the status of Panchen Lama's health and whereabouts. Especially now, with the pandemic situation, he demanded videographic evidence of the Lama's wellbeing.

Noting the Panchen Lama's case as reflective of the larger religious freedom violations of Tibetans, he cited Article 22, a recent amendment by China, enabling Chinese government authority to interfere in matters of appointment of

religious heads.

He urged the US Congress and President to implement the Magnitsky bill on Chinese officials responsible for the persecution of religious minorities, specifically referring to the Panchen Lama.

The Commissioner also thanked the Ambassador at large for International Religious Freedom and former USCIRF official Sam Brownback who travelled to India last year to meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama to raise attention to the importance of religious freedom, the issue of reincarnation and its significance for the Tibetan people. He ended by wishing for Panchen Lama's immediate release on behalf of all the Tibetans.

Lastly, President of the International Campaign for Tibet, Matteo Mecacci highlighting the systemic issues concerning Panchen Lama's illegal detention, pointed at China's efforts to control Tibetan society by seizing their centuries-old cherished institutions which includes the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama institution with the given objective of destroying Tibetan cultural identity which has benefited millions of Tibetan Buddhist practitioners across the world.

He referred to China's geopolitical campaign, its attempt to rewrite history

and engage in disinformation campaigns to further its colonialist interests. Though China has economic might and can temporarily suppress other countries with its economic muscle, it ultimately does not have control over human spirit and conscience, he said.

China's lack of transparency with the world in case of the coronavirus pandemic is something Tibetans have continued to face for 60 years since Chinese occupation, he said, urging the world to support Tibet in its cause for basic freedoms from which the world also would gain.

Unless China ushers political reforms, he warned that it would continue to bring such catastrophes upon its own public and the world at large.

Stating ICT's leadership in advocating in the US Congress for the passage of the Tibet Policy Act of 2019 which mandates sanctions on the Chinese government for egregious violations, Matteo noted the ripple effect of the important passage in the strengthening the discourse on the Tibet issue, the issue of the succession of the Dalai Lama and the religious freedom of Tibetans.

He hoped that this would force the UN to act accordingly and bring attention to the case of the disappearance of the Panchen Lama.

### Kashag issues Coronavirus guidelines, including ban on public gatherings for one month

In response to the gravity of the coronavirus pandemic, the Kashag of Central Tibetan Administration issued new guidelines, calling on Tibetan monasteries, schools and elder care homes in India, Nepal and Bhutan to cancel public gatherings for one month.



staff members of the Central Tibetan Administration, both at the centre as well as at the regional level, to postpone all official visits and to refrain from holding any meetings, training programs and workshops for one month among others.

The guidelines are to be implemented for a minimum of one month while at the same time following the guidelines issued by the respective state governments.

The guidelines also call on all boarding and day schools to be closed for a minimum of one month; Elderly care homes to restrict all outside visitors except for the staffs and nurses; All the

## Coronavirus pandemic; a Chinese Trojan horse to global hegemony

By Tsewang Gyalpo Arya \*

The Coronavirus pandemic, which originated from the Wuhan city of China last year, has affected and disturbed the world greatly. It has created a war-like situation in public health, economy, and politics and in international relations around the world. Many theories came up as to the cause of the Coronavirus, a spurt from the Wuhan wet market to an accident in a bio-warfare laboratory to Chinese conspiracy to disrupt the world order. Whatever the theories, one undeniable fact is that the virus originated from Wuhan, and China deliberately suppressed the information at the cost of global pandemic.



Chinese President Xi Jinping/ Xie Huanchi Xinhua / eyevine / Redux

The international community is unanimous in the deduction that the Chinese leadership mishandled the outbreak and is accountable to the devastation it wrecked around the world. The pandemic has exposed the ruthless nature of Xi Jinping's leadership and the insidious conspiracy of China to take the helm of world power at whatever cost. The world leaders are not happy with what China has done and how it is still bullying around with impunity.

Had China taken action and attended to the warning the Chinese doctor Li Wenliang and others gave at the early stages of the virus outbreak, this pandemic could have been contained and so many lives in China and around the world could have been saved. Unfortunately, the leadership silenced the voice of these sincere doctors and citizens who tried to warn the people of the incubating epidemic in the region.

This makes us ponder on the theory that the virus spread from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, one of the top most Chinese centers to study bio-warfare pathogens. The visit of the top Chinese expert in biological warfare, Major General Chen Wei, to the institute at the end of January with a team of scientists, and the proximity of the wet-market, the scapegoat as the origin of the virus, are all explicable. Outspoken intellectuals

like Prof Xu Zhangrun were arrested and their whereabouts are still unknown. Ms Fang Fang, the author of book 'Wuhan Dairy', is facing death threats.

As of now, more than two hundred thousand people have died and more than three million positive cases are reported, and the figures are still moving uphill. But what has China done, instead of apologizing and taking moral responsibility for the chaos it has created around the world, China tried to put the blame first on the US army, then on Italy and Kazakhstan, lately on the black people. Both the US and Italy are undergoing great difficulty and sufferings due to this Chinese virus, casualty and unemployment rate is the highest in these two countries. Yet, China has the guts to say that the virus originated from the US and Italy. Taking the opportunity of this pandemic state, China claimed Kazakhstan as historically part of China, and to further confuse the situation, it said the Coronavirus originated from the land.

The black people from the African countries, who helped sustain Chinese economy in various sectors, and whose countries welcomed Xi's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Chinese people to Africa, are now made a scapegoat to fit China's narrative that the virus was

of foreign origin. How black people are discriminated against and treated in Guangzhou city is something that will make humanity cry. Here in this internet world, we are able to see these atrocities, but Tibetans, Uighurs and Mongolians have gone through this kind of discrimination and torture for decades and are still suffering under the repressive communist regime.

When the Olympic Committee conferred China the honour to host the 2008 Olympic, China promised to relax and amend its notorious human rights, press and religious freedom records. The international community expected China to open up and subscribe to the international norms and democratic values after the Olympics. But China took the 2008 Olympic more as an acknowledgement by the world of its growing military and economic power, and endorsement of its human rights policies. In Tibet, human rights and religious freedom deteriorated greatly after the Olympic, restriction and surveillance became so severe that Tibetan refugees crossing the border came to nil since then. Today, the Tibetan plateau which His Holiness the Dalai Lama has once dreamt of making it as a Zone of Peace has become one of the highly militarized zones in the world today.



Even after all the chaos and pandemic it has created, China is trying to come out as a winner and take advantage of the devastation it has engineered. China continues to suppress information and its total Covid-19 cases remained stagnant at 82,000+ and the death at 4000+ since March, whereas actual casualty and death is said to be much higher. What is shocking here is, China supplied medical kits worth million dollars to combat Coronavirus disease in the US, Canada, Italy, India, Nepal and some other countries. But these kits were found faulty and were returned. They first send diseases and then sell medical kits which are faulty, and there is no sense of remorse and not a word of apology! Trade and economy, and stock markets have plummeted, but China is on buying spree! What does all these say about China?

Now, when the world is limping and struggling hard to recover from the pandemic, China has the audacity to send naval warships to Japan, South China seas, and the Indian Ocean. It arrested Martin Lee along with some 14 prominent democratic advocates in Hong Kong and has threatened to bomb Taiwan into submission. Yet, its White Paper on Defense says "China will never seek hegemony and sphere of influence",

and the Chinese Ambassador to India is seen harping on the same while Chinese cartographers are busy altering the map of Indian frontiers.

China is known for its violation of human rights, press and religious freedom, yet it has found its way to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) through dubious means. China has through its Belt and Road Initiative trapped many developing countries in debt trap. The lands and assets of these countries are held for ransom. The World Health Organization (WHO)'s Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has become a Chinese propaganda flute. Just recently, China pressured the European Union (EU) to soften its report on Covid-19 disinformation. These aggressive and heavy-handed tactics used by China are indicative of a dangerous and corrosive trend gnawing the future world order.

The international community should wake up to this Coronavirus alarm and bring the Chinese communist party to the International Court of Justice. More than 154 Tibetans have committed self-immolation since 2009 to protest the Chinese atrocities and to draw the attention of the international community to the injustice and human rights abuses

that Tibetans are subjected to. This Coronavirus pandemic has revealed how dangerous the Chinese dictatorial regime could be if left unchallenged. It exposed the true nature of the Chinese communist party and how it is a threat to global peace, stability and democracy.

The world leaders have decided to investigate and make China accountable for the chaos and the pandemic caused by the Coronavirus. The international lawsuits for more than twenty trillion US dollars against China for the economic loss is one thing, more importantly, the international community must take this opportunity and rise up together to free the world from the tyranny and the shackles of the communist dictatorship, and usher in a new global order of peace, justice and democracy. Whatever the cause of the virus, China used it as its Trojan horse to global hegemony. We all must work in unity to make China accountable for this grave conspiracy and crime against humanity.

*\* Tsewang Gyalpo Arya is the Director of TPI and Secretary of the DIIR of Central Tibetan Administration.*

**Disclaimer:** Views expressed above are the author's own. Reference for this article are published on [www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net)

### CTA holds virtual prayer gathering in honour of late CTA veteran Lobsang Khedup Drongretsang

The Central Tibetan Administration paid tribute to its veteran leader, late Lobsang Khedup Drongretsang, one of the longest-serving CTA officials who had dedicated a lifetime in service of the Tibetan cause and His Holiness the Dalai Lama.



*Gyang Khang Chotrul Rinpoche presents donation of Rs 10 lakh towards Karnataka CM relief fund.*

Led by the Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay and Kalons, the staff of the Central Tibetan Administration observed an online virtual prayer gathering in his honour via Google Hangout.

Addressing the prayer service, Sikyong condoled the demise of Lobsang Khedup, who he said, had served the CTA with distinguished honour and commitment,

a devout and principled person whose unflinching devotion to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tibetan cause will be remembered by all.

Sikyong added the prayer gathering could not be convened physically

due to the inconveniences caused by the Wuhan-originated coronavirus pandemic.

Sikyong further remarked that the prayer gathering was organised, specifically, in honour of the former Justice Commissioner, but he would also dedicate it to late CTA official Karma Wangchuk as well as for those who have died from the coronavirus.

As a mark of respect, CTA headquarters and its few essential offices, which are currently operational, would be suspended in the afternoon.

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## His Holiness the Dalai Lama: World Should Unite for a Coordinated Global Response to COVID-19

*In this time of serious crisis, we face threats to our health and sadness for the family and friends we have lost. Economic disruption is posing a major challenge to governments and undermining the ability of so many people to make a living.*

*It is during times like this that we must focus on what unites us as members of one human family. Accordingly, we need to reach out to each other with compassion. As human beings, we are all the same. We experience the same fears, the same hopes, the same uncertainties, yet we are also united by a desire for happiness. Our human capacity to reason and to see things realistically gives us the ability to transform hardship into opportunity.*

*This crisis and its consequences serve as a warning that only by coming together in a coordinated, global response, will we meet the unprecedented magnitude of the challenges we face. I pray we all heed 'The Call to Unite'.*

*Dalai Lama  
May 1, 2020*

*Message requested by The Call to Unite*