

Statement: 34th birthday of the 11th Panchen Lama

25 April 2023: Today marks the 34th birthday of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama, who remains missing since the Chinese authorities abducted him when he was a six-year-old child on 17 May 1995.

The Chinese authorities continue to deny members of the international community and Tibetan community access to the Panchen Lama recognised by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

In light of this, we call on the Chinese authorities **to give proof of life** and account for Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's whereabouts and well-being immediately. We also call on the Chinese authorities to allow him to fully exercise his fundamental freedoms, in line with PRC's international commitments.

The 11th Panchen Lama continues to be one of the world's longest-serving political prisoners and was the youngest political prisoner at the time of his abduction. Therefore, we call for Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his parents' immediate release without any conditions, along with all Tibetan political prisoners.

In addition, we strongly support Tibetan people's right to freedom of religion, cultural and linguistic identity, including Tibetans' right to select their own spiritual leaders according to their beliefs without government interference.


Thus, we condemn the Chinese government's interference in the selection and recognition of the reincarnation of His Holiness the 14th Dalai. The system of recognising reincarnated spiritual beings is a religious practice unique to Tibetan Buddhism and should solely be the prerogative of the present Dalai Lama himself and no one else.

Els Van Hoof,



President of the Foreign Affairs Committee,
Belgian Chamber of Representatives

Samuel Cogolati



Deputy Chair of the
Foreign Affairs Committee