

Vice-President Jiri Oberfalzer

Today in the gallery we have with us the envoy of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Ms. Thinley Chukki, who resides in Geneva. We extend our warmest greetings. Please feel free to applaud if you wish. (Clapping sound) She has come to see how we here can support the situation Tibetans are facing today at the hands of China and the Communist Party of the People's Republic of China. Resolution No. 135 of the Committee on Education, Science, Culture, Human Rights, and Petitions, along with the Senate's draft resolution, has been distributed to you on your left, and Senate President **Jitka Seitlova** will present the draft to us. You have the floor, Ms. **Jitka Seitlova**

Vice-President Mrs. Jitka Seitlova

Honorable Vice-President, Mr. Chairman, colleagues, we are continuing the debate that took place here earlier, when we discussed the geopolitical situation in the world. And the final item we will address today also falls under that topic. It concerns the current situation of minorities, specifically the Tibetan minority in the People's Republic of China, but, as we will learn, also worldwide, as well as the issue of the election of the new 15th Dalai Lama. Right off the bat, I'd like to say that it may seem, in light of the armed conflicts currently taking place around the world, that this topic is somehow less pressing, but it is not less pressing; it is just as significant, because it is precisely through these restrictions on freedom, these acts of curtailing identity and human rights, that the very things we do not want begin. After all, we want—and this is in our country's best interest—for the international treaties and commitments that we have strived to uphold for decades and on which we have relied to remain valid and be upheld,

because it is precisely these, perhaps still evolving in the future, that guarantee our security and what we want. So now to the situation concerning Tibet. The Czech Republic has long enjoyed very warm relations with the people of Tibet. It is not only because of the strong bond between President Václav Havel and the 14th Dalai Lama. It is not only because our President Petr Pavel visited the 14th Dalai

Lama, as did our Senate delegation led by Lonina in the fall or, rather, already in the winter. But above all, what compels us to address this situation and support the condemnation of injustice is our shared history. The history of occupation, which we too have experienced. Today, through great effort, we have emerged from that occupation, while Tibet continues to suffer under it. And I must say that when we

were part of the Senate delegation in Tibet—or rather, we weren't in Tibet, but in Dar al-Salem—we admired the will and strength of this people, who yearn for freedom and are willing to uphold that faith, even though it is very, very difficult for them. So let's talk about what this is all about. In the first phase, we wanted to address the possible future reincarnation of the current Dalai Lama, who celebrated his

90th birthday last year. His Holiness declared on July 2, 1925, that he would seek the reincarnation of the new Dalai Lama. That same week and in the days that followed, the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that this must, however, be in accordance with Chinese laws, under Chinese laws, and following approval by the Czech central government. On July 7, they issued another statement

regarding the current Dalai Lama as an exile engaged in anti-Chinese and parasitic activities. The fact that the People's Republic of China has long sought to discredit and denigrate the position of His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been known in the United States, in Europe, and around the world for some time. And I must say that in the United States, as early as 2020, legislation was passed

mandating sanctions against Czech officials who interfere with the identification and installation of the 15th Dalai Lama. The European Parliament also adopted a resolution declaring that it is unacceptable for these Chinese practices to be enforced and for interference to occur in the selection of spiritual leaders,

Tibetan spiritual leaders, including the Dalai Lama. Subsequently, following these statements regarding the election by the People's Republic of China, on July 15, the U.S. House of Representatives and the

U.S. Senate once again adopted a resolution supporting the Tibetan Buddhist community's right to freely elect the 15th Dalai Lama without interference from the People's Republic of China. Subsequently, on the occasion of the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday, the U.S. Secretary of State issued a statement reaffirming the commitment to uphold human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the preservation of Tibet's unique linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage, including the right to freely elect and worship religious leaders. Last but not least, the European Parliament and seven EU human rights ambassadors also prepared a similar declaration, and last November, the International

Conference on Freedom of Religion in Prague reaffirmed the Tibetan Buddhist community's right to determine the Dalai Lama's future successor. So you see that the entire world—European and democratic countries on other continents—is taking a clear stance that it is not possible to attempt to discredit in this way the authenticity of the Dalai Lama as their leader, their representative, and their

powerful ideological symbol. You know, the fact that the People's Republic of China is trying to suppress the Tibetan people is a situation we've been aware of for some time. I'd like to share a few more insights: Why does China care so much about discrediting and destroying the Tibetan people in this way? Well, the territory of Tibet, which is supposed to be an autonomous region of China, is an area that is actually a source of water, and the world's largest dam is now to be built there, one that will be larger than the Three Gorges Dam. The world's largest solar power plant has already been built here. It covers an area larger than the city of Prague. A massive data center with the most powerful computer has

been built in Tibet. But what's more, the wealth of this part of the country is referred to as the "Western Treasury." In addition to water resources and copper, Tibet possesses lithium for batteries and other technologies. China is among the largest producers and distributors of lithium. According to estimates, Tibet has more lithium than previously thought. And it is precisely in this strategically important region that the People's Republic of China is investing heavily in militarization and military infrastructure. A

new military airport has been built here; in preparation for potential wars—perhaps with India—there are missiles, ground-to-air systems, and fighter aircraft. So this is how significant it is for the country, and that is why there is a major effort to suppress identity, to suppress Tibetans who are striving for a certain degree of autonomy. And that is one of the things that I consider very, very serious and to which we should pay attention, precisely because it touches on international law. I would like to mention the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which enshrines the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including the prohibition of coercion and the right to practice one's faith publicly and privately. In November 1981, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and

Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. China is a signatory and has accepted these declarations.

Experts and the Dalai Lama clearly state that any selection or appointment of a successor to the current Dalai Lama that would be contrary to Tibetan traditions and the wishes of Tibetan Buddhist communities will have no cultural, religious, or communal authenticity or support. Well, March 10 is the anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising. And that is the day when we just declared here in the Senate that we are preparing such a resolution together with my colleagues, Senator Přemysl Rabas, Senator Vřetislav Rychlík, and Senator Růžička, who unfortunately is not here at the moment. Two days later, China introduced a law: the Law on Ethnic Unity and Development. This law has a wonderful

name, but it is about something entirely different. It states that anyone who seeks to promote separatist views in any way, or who expresses dissent by refusing to adhere to a single faith—specifically, not the Tibetan faith—and asserts other cultural claims, will have such actions deemed extremist and terrorist in nature and will be suppressed. Of course, in Tibet itself, there is already a massive restriction and suppression of freedom, religion, and Tibetans as such. I have the latest

information here, which comes from a speech by Her Excellency Ambassador Nechaka, who states that, in the current effort to erase Tibet's identity and language, over a million Tibetan children are already

separated from their families and placed in so-called colonial boarding schools. They are forced to give up their mother tongue and are taught to replace their cultural heritage with loyalty to the Communist Party. Yes, these children are taken from their parents against their will at the age of 4. Can you imagine how painful that is? We have also seen that the Tibetan people suffer greatly from the lack of freedom. And we have seen, I would say, evidence of how, with the last words "freedom for Tibet," more than 200 people—200 young people—have set themselves on fire in Tibet in recent years, precisely so that the whole world would know that things are not right and that they want to live in freedom. I must say that what is obviously happening in China is very wrong, and that is why, in cooperation with the Committee on Foreign Affairs, particularly with its chairman, Mr. Fischer, we have supplemented our original resolution with points expressing our disagreement with what the new Chinese law against Tibet—and not only against Tibet—against all minorities in the People's Republic of China. I say "in the People's Republic of China," but the law states that even those living outside Chinese territory who engage in such expressions—which are separatist against China or directed against what is understood as Chinese ethnic unity—are also subject to this Chinese law. This applies, for example, to people who hold U.S.

citizenship, European citizenship, the European Union—are also subject to it. From the documents we have received from the Central Tibetan Administration, it is clear that so-called transnational repression already exists worldwide. There are, as we have heard before, foreign police stations. There are more than a hundred of these police stations in various countries across Europe, including Prague, where one such police station was also identified. And they monitor, harass, and—in some cases—attempt to

repress Tibetans living here, or those who support them. So now, if you'll allow me, I will read the draft resolution to you as it stands. You do have it, but that's how it's supposed to be. I don't want to keep you waiting unnecessarily, but it really does need to be read. So, the Senate's draft resolution. I will read only the points that are in the appendix, and then perhaps the rapporteur will read the beginning of the resolution. The Senate recalls the long-standing warm relations between the people of the Czech

Republic and the people of Tibet, as well as the private meeting of the President of the Republic on

July 27, 2025, in Leh, Ladakh, and the meeting of the Czech parliamentary delegation in Dharamsala on

December 10, 2025, with the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, the 14th Dalai Lama. It recalls that the text of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China guarantees the rights of ethnic minorities, including the right to use their own language and develop their own culture, which also applies to the inhabitants of the autonomous region. Third, it considers Buddhism to be a spiritual tradition of Tibet, as a supreme expression of culture, and that this spiritual culture must be protected. The People's Republic of China has voluntarily assumed these obligations as a member of UNESCO, specifically by acceding to the

Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity in 2021 and ratifying the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2025, which establishes the principle of equal dignity and respect for all cultures in Article 2, paragraph 3 of the Convention. The obligation to create conditions for the cultural expressions of indigenous peoples, Article 7, paragraph 1a, imposes certain restrictions on signatory states when formulating cultural policy, as stated in Article 2, paragraph 2,

because a sovereign state must not restrict or erase cultural diversity, but rather protect and promote it. Fourth, the Senate received with concern the information that the People's Republic of China had passed a new law on promoting ethnic unity and progress on March 12, 2026, which openly advocates assimilation, restrictions on culture, religious freedom, and education in minority languages—a move also criticized by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Fifth, it expresses concern over reports of the People's Republic of China's long-standing efforts to influence the election of the incoming 15th Dalai Lama and shares the concerns of the Central Tibetan Administration, the Tibetan diaspora, and the Tibetan Buddhist community regarding the People's Republic of China's interference in the Tibetan people's free choice of the next 15th Dalai Lama. Sixth, the Senate respects the religious freedoms of the Tibetan people within their unique Buddhist tradition, including the freedom to choose religious

leaders without interference from the People's Republic of China. Seventh, it supports free discussion within the Tibetan Central Administration and among the Tibetan people regarding the selection of the next spiritual leader, the 15th Dalai Lama, without coercion or interference from the People's Republic of China. Eighth, it declares that the People's Republic of China has no legitimate authority to select the

successor to the 14th Dalai Lama, and that the election of the 15th Dalai Lama is the exclusive matter of the Tibetan people. Now we have the second point, which follows the first. It recommends that the Government of the Czech Republic support the free election of the 15th Dalai Lama with a view to

respecting the religious freedom of the Tibetan people, and second, it instructs the President of the Senate to inform the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of this resolution. Thank you for your attention.

Vice-President Jiri Oberfalzer

Thank you, Madam Acting Chairwoman, please take a seat at the rapporteurs' table. We will now appoint the rapporteurs. I propose that Senator Přemysl Rabas serve as rapporteur, and it appears he agrees. If there are no objections, I will put it to a vote, but first I will call on my colleagues. (music plays) We will vote on the motion to appoint Senator Přemysl Rabas as the rapporteur for this matter, and I am opening the vote. Those in favor, please raise your hand and press the "yes"

button. There are 44 senators registered in the chamber; the quorum is 23. Those opposed, please raise your hand and press the “no” button. Vote number 25, with a quorum of 23: 41 in favor, none opposed—the motion has been approved. I ask the rapporteur if he wishes to comment on the resolution immediately. Yes. Please proceed.

Senator Premysl Rabas

Your Excellency, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, This is the last item on today’s agenda, but that does not mean it is the least important, as the Acting President of the Senate has already noted. In the context of what is happening in the world, it may seem unimportant to us, but that is not the case. After all, it may seem that we talk about Tibet over and over again, but it is important. Just as when we lived without freedom, we were grateful that the free world took an interest in us—that, for example, when President Mitran welcomed visitors to Prague, he welcomed dissidents who supported the effort to liberate the Czech Republic from the totalitarian regime. Likewise, I believe it is important to constantly draw attention to where human rights are being violated around the world, where states are occupied and denied the right to independent existence. And after all, Tibet is not just some small village or a tiny province; Tibet makes up one-third of China, which is a vast territory. And what led the committee to adopt this draft resolution is primarily what has happened recently and what the Acting President of the Senate has detailed here, namely, first and foremost, the Chinese leadership’s attempt to usurp the decision-making process regarding the selection of the 15th Dalai Lama. And I would like to say that this is roughly equivalent to, say, Ursula von der Leyen usurping the authority and deciding that from now on, the European Union, the leadership of the European Union, will decide on the election of the Pope. It is on roughly the same level. So that is one factor that led us to this, and the second is precisely the aforementioned passage of the law, which, under the guise of progress, is essentially intended to openly promote the assimilation of minorities and restrict culture and language. So, the committee considered this proposal and, in its 135th resolution from the 20th session on March 24, 2026, regarding the election of the new 15th Daleilama and the situation of minorities following the adoption of the Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress in the People’s Republic of China, it adopted a resolution with which you have been acquainted, which you have in written form, and therefore I need not read it; I simply ask that you support it.

Vice-President Jiri Oberfalzer

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Rapporteur. Please be seated. I open the floor for debate, and Senator Rychlík is the first to speak.

Senator Bretislav Rychlik

Your Excellency, dear Čuky, Mr. Chairman, Madam Vice-Chair, I would like to thank you, colleagues, for staying here. This morning I spoke at a conference on Sinicization and I was quite personal; I described the situation, and I apologize—I’m saying this again—but you weren’t there. When you enter the Museum of Tibetan History in Dharamsala, the very first thing that strikes you is the list of those young people who self-immolated in protest against the Chinese occupation and

genocide. Their names are there; each has a plaque with their last words, written in Tibetan on one side and in English on the other, and their ages—18, 19 years old. Young men, young women. There are even images of some of their burning bodies. You also see how Tibetan parents try to protect at least one child from their family from being taken away for re-education in the communist spirit, away from their families to Chinese communist boarding schools. Those little children walk through the eternal snow, crossing the border accompanied by perhaps a few monks, and there are simply photographs of frostbite and such severe injuries that these children must endure to reach exile, where they can speak their language and practice their faith. It is something we simply cannot imagine. And I'm saying quite clearly, this is simply a massive attempt at genocide against a historic nation. The Dalai Lama's institution has been here since the 14th century. I'd like to correct my colleague, Přemek—it's not like the European Union; it's as if the Kremlin were electing the Pope. And well, I think that's more accurate. So I want to ask you, let's support this, because this is truly one of the most painful things happening in the world right now, and the geopolitical significance of the Tibetan plateau is simply immense on various levels, as the honorable Vice Chairwoman described here. It is a vast part of the world, but whoever controls it effectively controls the entire world. They control it economically, militarily, and ecologically. So please, let's support this resolution. It's the least we can do. Thank you.

Vice-President Jiri Oberfalzer

I am closing the debate, as no one else has asked to speak. I ask the proposer if she wishes to add anything. Mr. Rapporteur, I would like to ask you for your closing remarks before we vote.

Senator Přemysl Rabas

Mr. Chairman, thank you. My position is simple. One senator spoke during the debate, which leads me to believe that this is not a point of contention for my esteemed colleagues, and I hope we can agree and adopt the proposed resolution. Therefore, I propose that we vote in favor of the resolution proposed by the committee. Thank you, I will call on my colleagues. [soft music]

Vice-President Jiri Oberfalzer

I am opening the vote on the motion to approve the resolution submitted by the committee. Those in favor, please raise your hand and press the Yes button. There are 44 senators present in the chamber, and the quorum is 23. Those opposed, please raise your hand and press the No button. Vote number 26: 40 in favor, none opposed—the motion has been approved. Let us hope that Tibet will one day be free and that at least some of us will live to see it. I am closing today's session, as we have exhausted the agenda. The next plenary session is on April 15. Enjoy Easter. Stay strong. Every trial will be more difficult than the last time.