

Statement of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile on 10 March 2018, the 59th Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day.

Today marks the completion of 59 years of Communist-ruled China's armed occupation and annexation of the great nation of Tibet. Adopting a policy of forced occupation of Tibetan territory, China under the rule of its communist party not only launched an armed invasion of Tibet and carried out an unimaginable scale of repression on its people; it also plotted a devious scheme that directly threatened the life of irreplaceable spiritual leader and temporal head of the Tibetan nation and people, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. This created a situation of utmost urgency leading the Tibetan people from all the three traditional provinces of Tibet to revolt in unison in a spontaneous uprising movement against the Chinese invaders on 10th of March in 1959. The Chinese army launched an armed repression of the Tibetan uprising, by bombarding the Potala palace and the Norbulingka with artillery shells. It was the most tragic development without any parallel in the history of Tibet. It is impossible for the people of the Snowland (Tibet), through generation after generation, to ever forget that tragic moment in their nation's history. This day is also being observed, at the same time, as the Martyr's Day in commemoration of all the heroic men and women of Tibet for their patriotism and sacrifices. And so, on this occasion, we offer our gratitude and solemn remembrance to the martyred men and women of Tibet for their valor and sacrifices for the sake of the religious, political and ethnic causes of the Tibetan nation. To those in Tibet today, who continue to suffer persecutions in prisons and in other circumstances too, we offer our solidarity.

Over the period it has exercised its rule over both the land and inhabitants of Tibet, the government of China has, among numerous other things, trampled on the human rights of the Tibetan people; deprived them of their freedom of religious belief; actively neglected their linguistic heritage, both in their spoken and written aspects; wreaked havoc on the natural environment of the land and implemented a policy of colonial rule. With numerous policies encouraging Chinese immigration into Tibet, Tibetans are gradually being sinicized with more and more sinicizing policies and measures that continue to roll out since from the great Cultural revolution even today. The Tibetan people have made known their rejection of these policy campaigns through successive peaceful protests but rather than being attentive to the wishes of the Tibetan people, the government of China has responded to their expressions of opposition with nothing but inhuman violence and repression. It was under such repressions that more than 1.2 million Tibetan people have been deprived of their lives. More than six thousand places of religious study and worship have been annihilated. In the year 2008, the entire region of Tibet was hit by the great Earth-Mouse Year peaceful protest movement. In particular, since the 23rd of February 2009, when Tabey, a monk from Kirti Monastery in Ngaba Prefecture of Sichuan Province set himself on fire till the 7th of March, 2018 when Tsekho, a 44 year old man from a nomadic village in Meruma township in Amdo Ngaba, torched himself, a total of 152 Tibetan people – including monks and nuns as well as lay men and women, both old and young – have been learnt and verified to have carried out self-immolations in protest against the Chinese rule. And they carried out their peaceful protests demanding His Holiness the Dalai Lama to be allowed to return to Tibet and that the freedom of the Tibetan people in Tibet should be respected. It is abundantly clear and has become self-evident that the reason why these developments took place was because the government of China has, under its continuing harsh hardline policies, subjected the Tibetan people in Tibet to highly tightened scrutiny and repression, with their wishes and aspirations totally ignored, as though being incarcerated in a prison.

From the 1st of February this year, the so-called State Religious Affairs Bureau of China's State

Council stated that the Chinese government was going to implement a new policy on matters concerned with religion. Under it, the Chinese government took direct control of the funds and all aspects of religious activities of every monastery in Tibet. Incorporating the stability and prosperity of both the religious and political matters together, it continues to abuse the Tibetan's freedom of religious belief and hurt their sentiments. Tibetan pilgrims to sacred places in India and Nepal are put under tight scrutiny when issuing visa and if visas are issued at all, provision of a guarantor is made compulsory with conditions that enable the pilgrims to be recalled back to Tibet forthwith at any time. These and other kinds of restrictions from the government of China have caused severe harassments to the Tibetan people. A Chinese government document obtained by the United States-based Human Rights Watch on the 24th of January 2018 revealed that having carried out its expulsion of the planned numbers of monks and nuns at the Larung Gar Tibetan Buddhist Academy and Monastery in Serta County, the government of China had appointed a total of nearly 200 Communist Party cadres to take charge of the administration, finance, security, teaching, admission as well as the curriculum of the monastic teaching, thereby, effecting their complete takeover. This matter was raised in the United States Congress by Congressman Jim McGovern, Co-Chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the United States House of Representatives. The fact that the government of China has appointed nearly 200 communist party cadres at the Larung Gar Tibetan Buddhist Academy and Monastery to carry out restrictions and exercise controls in an even more severe manner than before clearly reveal that it is adhering to a policy of only worsening the situation in Tibet. Through numerous other non-conspicuous activities that is being carried out currently, expelling Tibetan monks and nuns from various monasteries and nunneries including in Serta Larung Gar Academy, it has become abundantly clear that the restrictions imposed on the religious freedom of the general Tibetan populace has been becoming ever more critical.

Through extraction of mineral ores and clearing of virgin forests for their timber, China continues to wreak havoc on Tibet's natural environment without any sort of restraint, affecting the grassland to turn to desert. The rivers of Tibet are turning murky due to pollution. The glaciers of the Tibetan Plateau are melting at an even more rapid pace than before that the situation has become critical. Also, the rivers of Tibet are being dammed; they are also being sought to be diverted under a project called South-North Water Transfer Project. Actions and projects such as these, which are still being continuously carried out, greatly affect the natural environment globally in general, especially in the continent of Asia. The fact that such avaricious ecological exploitation will have an unimaginable effect on billions of people whose livelihood depends on natural resources cannot be disputed. This is surely a matter of utmost concern to everyone. Late last year, China's Ministry of Environmental Protection dispatched a national investigation team to eight provinces, including in the Tibet Autonomous Region, for a duration of one month to find out about the state of environmental protection. And the fact that their investigation report as declared on January 3rd of this year at the capital city, Lhasa, revealed a severe shortfall in the environmental protection that failed to meet the requirements of the Central Government and punishments accorded accordingly, is but a concrete proof of the ongoing incessant exploitations of Tibet's natural environment and its resources.

Likewise, in order to radically change the Tibetan people's time-tested, centuries-old traditional way of life, the government of China recently issued a decree to a substantial number of semi-pastoralists in Chamdo Prefecture of Tibet Autonomous Region, requiring them to evict their ancestral land. And it turned out, and has now become clear, that the Chinese government wanted to take over their land for the purpose of extracting mineral ores. This has come become clear from the fact, for example, that copper has begun to be extracted from a place called Lungri, located near Dege Jomda and the area has been fenced in with restrictions imposed in the accessibility of its surrounding.

According to a Shanghai online news report in January this year, the expansion of tourism infrastructure carried earlier in the southern Tibetan city of Shigatse will be repeated in Tibet's capital Lhasa this year with the expectation of attracting of around 20 million tourists between the year 2018 and 2020. This year, in the name of winter tourism preferential plans in the Tibet Autonomous Region,

it was announced in January that for a period of three months, tourists visiting the Potala Palace, while being usually required to buy tickets, would be allowed free entry. Also, discounts have been offered for travels, stays in hotels and so on. In essence, this is a plan meant to be used to encourage more Chinese people to immigrate into the Tibetan territory in an ongoing development whose intensity is rising on a daily basis.

Tashi Wangchuk-la, a Tibetan man who reveres the linguistic heritage of his people and campaigns for their right to learn their own language, was arrested by the government of China on the 27th of January in 2016 and has remained in detention ever since. Although he was put on a so-called trial recently after being kept in detention for two years, no verdict has been announced so far. He had petitioned the government of China on the need for it to pay due attention to the right of the Tibetan people to preserve their language so as to be in compliance with the guarantees provided to them under the relevant provisions of the Chinese laws. However, the Chinese government simply criminalized his activism and continues to hold him in detention. Nevertheless, his case has attracted wide international attention, with governments, parliaments, and human rights organizations supporting him, calling for his demands to be met while strongly criticizing the government of China and demanding that it release him forthwith. It has, therefore, become important for us Tibetans at all levels – whether as an individual, groups or as part of the Central Tibetan Administration – living in free countries to not remain immersed solely in our own narrow, immediate personal interests. Rather, we all should pay greater attention to studying, using and promoting the Tibetan language. The question of whether the Tibetan people as an ethnic group and their culture will survive or not on this globe in the future depends on the sustenance of the Tibetan linguistic heritage.

Within Tibet as well as in China, it is difficult to know from the online social media platforms the real situation within the country and the desires of the people, as well as about the developments in the outside world because of the government censorships in the country that keep increasing day by day. On the 2nd of February this year, the Cyberspace Administration of China issued an order, requiring that microblog operators must set up a mechanism to monitor internet accounts for false information and delete it, while raising the level of supervision to ensure compliance. It said regulators will "strengthen strict supervision" of operators of online platforms. And it became clear that information not in keeping with the position of the government would be subjected to the strictest of censorship. On the second day of the Tibetan Earth-Dog New Year which corresponded to the 17th of February 2018, a devastating fire engulfed the Jokhang Temple complex, a World Heritage Site situated in the Tibetan capital Lhasa, in a sudden development. Nevertheless, the government of China has, thus far, concealed all information about how the fire started and whether the temple's principal content of the Jowo Rinpoche statue had in any way been damaged by the fire. There has simply been no clarity of information or explanation on any of these matters. From this development, it emerges as extremely clear the extent to which the government of China really gives importance and provides protection to the objects of the Tibetan people's worship and their sacred cultural heritage items. It has constantly sought to deceive the people in the outside world with incongruous information that defy credibility. Hence, we wish to appeal to all the concerned and relevant entities in the international community to probe further into the actual situation concerning the damage likely to have been caused by the fire to the Jokhang Temple and its sacred religious contents.

It has been a habit of the government of China to refer to and criticize the activities of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to the Central Tibetan Administration as separatist. It has not made any change to its hardline policy underlying this claim. However, it is ultimately unavoidable for the government of China to adopt a policy of liberalism and to take into consideration the aspirations of the Tibetan people, thereby making efforts to resolve the Sino-Tibetan dispute. Likewise, there has been no change whatsoever in the desire of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the determination of the Central Tibetan Administration to strive to alleviate the current tragic situation in Tibet by making efforts to reach a settlement through dialogue with the government of China on the basis of the mutually beneficial Middle Way Approach. This being the case, we reiterate our call on the leaders of the

People's Republic of China too to seize the opportunity that still exists, to eschew the blame game and make urgent efforts to arrive at a Sino-Tibetan dialogue.

All the people of Snowland (Tibet) have an unavoidable duty of great importance, devoid of any subterfuge, to ensure that their conducts accomplish results that gladden His Holiness the Dalai Lama's heart on the basis of following his guiding light, especially by adhering to firm commitment to the unity of all the traditional provinces of Tibet and all the religious traditions of the land. Accordingly, we appeal everyone to strive to achieve meaningful results by pooling together their energy and by lending their cooperation towards achieving the common goal that subserve both our immediate and long term interests. This requires that there be fraternity amongst the Tibetan people, that there be efforts to enhance the collective merits of the Tibetan people, and that there be cherishing of the Tibetan religious traditions, culture, language, and so on.

And on the basis of expressing remembrance of gratitude we owe to the governments and people of India, both at the centre and in the states, besides international governments, parliaments and people, we take this opportunity to say 'Thank You Very Much' to all.

Finally, we pray that His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the incomparable leader of all Tibetans, live for a hundred aeons and may the just cause of the Tibetan people prevail.

By the Tibetan Parliament in Exile

10 March 2018

.....
.....

* In case of any discrepancy between this English translation and its Tibetan original, the latter should be considered authoritative and final for all purposes.