



Press Release

Commemoration of 59th Tibetan National Uprising Day

Fifty-nine years ago, on 10 March 1959 in Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet, thousands of Tibetans formed a massive human chain around Norbulingka, the summer palace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, to protect him and their country.

Tibetans from across the social spectrum, united by the indomitable Tibetan spirit staged a defiant, yet peaceful and historic uprising against the forceful and illegal occupation of Tibet by the People's Republic of China. The Chinese military brutally suppressed the peaceful uprising resulting in the death of thousands of Tibetans.

To commemorate the 59th anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day and to remember and honor all the Tibetans who have sacrificed their lives for our nation's struggle for freedom, the Central Tibetan Administration will organise an annual function at Tsuglakhang, McLeod Ganj. This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the 2008 pan-Tibet uprisings. The peaceful uprising was the result of the Chinese government's unrelenting assault on Tibetan religion and culture in all forms and manners, and in all parts of Tibet.

Since the occupation of Tibet, Chinese government has continually subjected Tibetans to extensive repressive policies. Given the hardline policies, since 2009, 151 Tibetans, young and old, monks and nuns, nomads and farmers, from all three provinces of Tibet have burnt themselves calling for freedom for Tibetans and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

The recent tragic news of the fire breakout on February 17th at the Jokhang temple, Tsuklagkhang, which houses the Jokhang chapel, the holiest shrine in the Tibetan Buddhist world and also a UNESCO recognized world heritage site is of great sadness to Tibetans and Buddhists around the world.

There are reports of extensive damage and loss owing to the burning of dozen precious statues, hundreds of artifacts and thangkas, and murals. Clearly this is an irreplaceable loss of a sacred treasure of an ancient Tibetan civilization. Now, even after a fortnight, the authorities' refusal to clarify the cause of the fire and the damage that it has caused is disturbing and raises more questions.

The CTA therefore urges UNESCO to send UN officials to investigate into the matter and send journalists into Tibet for an independent investigation.

In the last 59 years, the Tibetan non-violent struggle for freedom and peace spearheaded by His Holiness the Dalai Lama has gained support and solidarity from all over the world. I pay my respect and thank all the world leaders, governments, parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations and individuals who have and continue to empathize and tirelessly support the Tibet cause.

The Central Tibetan Administration will also mark this year as Thank You Year to thank India and the countries around the world that generously continue to host and support Tibetans.

Kashag
Central Tibetan Administration