



INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY FOR TIBET



Members of the European Parliament showing their solidarity with Tibet

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) proudly celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2013. For more than two decades, ICT has called the world's attention to the injustices and brutality suffered by the people of Tibet. With offices in Washington, DC, Amsterdam, Berlin and Brussels, ICT's advocacy work reaches international audiences, gaining support for Tibet among national capitals and international bodies. Central to the mission of ICT's advocacy is support for the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach for dialogue with Chinese officials, Tibetans' human rights, refugee protection and humanitarian assistance, and economic development for Tibetans in exile and in Tibet.

Since 2002, with the passage of the Tibet Policy Act,

the US Government has been submitting an annual report to the Congress on the status of Sino-Tibetan negotiations. Congress has established the position of a Special Coordinator for Tibet within the US State Department.¹ In October 2007, after a concerted lobbying effort by ICT and fellow Tibet supporters, the US Congress awarded the Dalai Lama with the highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal, for his commitment to nonviolence and dialogue, presented by then President George W. Bush. In 2014, US President Barack Obama met with the Dalai Lama for the third time.²

Internationally, ICT offices work closely with the European Union, particularly the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Parliament (EP).

¹ For more information, see ICT's report at <http://www.savetibet.org/policy-center/tibetan-policy-act>

² For more information, see ICT's report at <http://www.savetibet.org/dalai-lama-engages-with-president-obama-for-third-time/>



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From 1989 to 2014 there was a Tibet Intergroup in the European Parliament (TIG), which was first founded by the French MEP (Member of the European Parliament) Michel Hervé. The Tiananmen Square Massacre in June 1989 was a central motivation for the founding of the Tibet Intergroup after the European elections in June 1989.

As a result of various efforts made by the Tibet Intergroup, the European Parliament has become the main base of support for Tibet within the European Union. The efforts of the Members of the Intergroup have shed a spotlight on China's ongoing repression of Tibet and its people and have done much within the European political realm to provide practical help and support for a peaceful and just future for the Tibetans.

Pushing for a unified EP position on Tibet, ICT has educated MEPs and provided information and briefings for members and delegations traveling to Tibet to monitor the human rights situation. ICT has actively participated in and co-hosted several World Parliamentarians Conferences for Tibet, engaging MPs from around the world to help find a solution for the future of Tibet.

Following the European elections of 2014, the Tibet Intergroup was not reestablished.

ICT is disappointed that a 25-year-long tradition has come to an end, but that doesn't mean that the work on Tibet in the EP will stop. Thanks to its campaign, ICT has become to know many new fierce supporters of Tibet. We are certain that voices in the EP speaking up for Tibet will not be silenced and that the non-violent struggle of Tibetans for greater freedom will stay in the spotlight.

As a credible advocate, ICT also provides testimony to the United Nations, in particular to the Human Rights Council (HRC). ICT's efforts include testifying

before the HRC, UN Committees, attending UN conferences, and appealing to Special Rapporteurs, Working Groups and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Working to provide world leaders with the facts about the reality in Tibet, ICT encourages multilateral action to engage Chinese leaders to end their human rights abuses and to peacefully engage with Tibetan officials.

With a field office in Dharamsala, India as well as a strong network of Tibetans, ICT is able to provide up to date reporting on the human rights situation in Tibet and the motivation and condition of refugees fleeing into exile. This information is then communicated to government officials and international bodies, which are best suited to take bilateral action with the Chinese government. For example, during the March 2008 demonstrations in Tibet, ICT was looked upon by governments and others as a source for up to date information on the situation on the ground, responding to the international community and ICT's pressure to pass resolutions and offer statements condemning China's actions.

ICT maintains an extensive list of Tibetan political prisoners, the charges against them, and their sentences – a source which features prominently in ICT's advocacy work. Working with international governments and world leaders on behalf of individual Tibetan political prisoners, ICT engages leaders to ensure that they raise the cases of these political prisoners during bilateral meetings with Chinese officials. In 2003, following a concerted lobbying effort by ICT and other Tibet support groups, international interlocutors from the US, France, and other governments negotiated the release of Ngawang Sangdrol after she had served 11 years of a 21 year sentence for peaceful protest—the longest sentence received by a female political prisoner in Tibet.

Apart from these individual cases, ICT also advo-



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cates at national level, requesting financial aid for development programs in Tibet. Annually, funding from American, European and Asian governments goes towards small-scale development programs empowering local Tibetans inside Tibet.

Tibetans in exile also benefit from ICT's advocacy work, as its efforts often focus on securing humanitarian assistance for new refugees and funding for Tibetan exile infrastructure projects. Advocating towards national legislatures has yielded significant financial support for various assistance programs for Tibetan exiles. The construction of buildings in the Refugee Reception Centers in Dharamsala and

Kathmandu as well as the additions to the Tibetan Children's Village School in Bir, India, would not have been possible without the support of international governments.

The persistence and creativity of committed parliamentarians from around the world represent an invaluable component of the wider effort to bring about a mutually beneficial solution for the future of Tibet. ICT's future advocacy will continue to revolve around raising awareness among international governments and encouraging world leaders to engage China on Tibet.