



Tibetan Community in Switzerland & Liechtenstein

Tibeter Gemeinschaft in der Schweiz & Liechtenstein

**8th action of the second year of the Tibetan Community in Switzerland and Liechtenstein
for a 2-year campaign since May 30, 2011:
UN to send an independent fact-finding mission to Tibet
"End the forced resettlement of Tibetan nomads!"
The 8th action of the second year will take place at Palais Wilson:
February 15th 2013 from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm**

The local Tibetan community sections of Wädenswil and Zurich together with their supporters will stage an action to demand an end to the forced resettlement of Tibetan nomads, depriving them of their right to subsistence and cultural identity.

Under the pretence of environmental protection, the Chinese government is eradicating the traditional way of life and means of subsistence of the nomadic population, which has been perfectly balanced with the natural environment for centuries. A recent study conducted by the Chinese government showed that climate change was most responsible for grassland degradation, not animal overgrazing. This shows again that the aim of the Chinese government is to achieve greater control over Tibetans and to obtain even unhindered access to the natural resources, which in turn accelerates the degradation of the environment.

For many generations, pastoralism on the grasslands of the Tibetan plateau has been the best and the only option to live successfully. Over the time, Tibetan pastoral nomads (drogpas) have skillfully introduced domestic herds and maintained an extraordinary biodiversity of grasses and sedges. China's new grassland policies and laws restrict the flexibility and mobility of the nomads. Actually, these 'drogpas' were the first stewards of these vast grasslands and have successfully maintained a sustainable and mobile lifestyle for many centuries.

It is estimated that since 2000 around 250,000 nomads have been forced into urban settlements by Chinese government. Under the Chinese policy of *tuimu huancao* ("removing animals to grow grass") almost all of Tibet's two million nomads will have become displaced persons by the year 2013. This deprives them of their right to choose their means of subsistence as stated in article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ratified by the Peoples' Republic of China in 2001.

Forced resettlement of nomads often involves the slaughter of their livestock and being relocated to poorly built concrete houses. The nomads have no choice but to abandon their traditional lifestyle and many are driven to poverty, frustration and despair. Revenues from the sale of their livestock are used up quickly in the new environment, and they are left without any further source of income. In many cases they even have to pay back loans for their houses. The nomads were not given any right to appeal against the resettlement decision, and they have not been involved in any meaningful consultation on alternative options.

We call on the United Nations to send an independent fact-finding mission with unhindered access to Tibet and support our demands:

- 1. Put an immediate end to the forced resettlements of nomads**
- 2. Respect the nomads' right to choose their means of subsistence**
- 3. Engage in a meaningful consultation with the nomadic herders on all available options in order to enhance their knowledge of the preservation of their environment.**
- 4. To call on China to resume the dialogue with the Tibetan Representatives in order to find a mutually agreeable solution to longstanding political problems**

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