



Tibetan Community in Switzerland & Liechtenstein

Tibeter Gemeinschaft in der Schweiz & Liechtenstein

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Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights
Mrs. Navanethem Pillay
Palais Wilson
52 rue des Pâquis
CH-1201 Geneva

Rapperswil, 17th September 2012

Defender of Human Rights – 3rd Action of TCSL 2-year Campaign
Appeal to UN to send an independent fact-finding mission to Tibet now!
Appeal to UN: “Safeguard Tibetan Children’s rights”

Your Excellency

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Commencing May 30, 2011, Tibetans and their supporters have started a 2-year campaign to appeal to the UN to send an independent fact-finding mission to Tibet. We kindly invite you to come and visit us at the site of our 3rd action at the Palais Wilson on September 21, from 11:30 am to 4 pm.

The action will be staged with the motto "Safeguard Tibetan Children’s Rights”.

Tibetans from the sections Rapperswil-Jona/Uznach-Wattwil and their supporters are demanding the rights of Tibetan children and reminding the public of the immediate threat of extinction of the Tibetan language and culture that will result from the implementation of recent Chinese plans for a new language policy at schools, as well as of the crackdown following the series of self-immolations that is also affecting Tibetan schools. Even more concerning, arbitrary detention and torture remain widespread and systematic instruments of Chinese political repression in Tibet, even to the extent of being wielded against children.

One of the biggest threats to Tibetan culture are the plans of government authorities to make Mandarin Chinese the primary language of instruction in the Tibetan schools in the province of Qinghai by 2015. All lessons and textbooks should be in Chinese language in primary schools by 2015 except Tibetan and English language classes. This will not only downgrade Tibetan to a “second language” with less time accorded to it in the curriculum, but poses a major threat to the children’s cultural identity.

Already the current reality of education, and even more these plans, represent a blatant violation of Article 37 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy states which demands “that institutions of education where most of the students come from minority nationalities shall, whenever possible, use textbooks in their own languages and use their languages as the media of instruction.” In reality, the Chinese leaders have always held the view that for the ultimate control of Tibet, the Tibetan language and culture must be destroyed and replaced with Chinese. Therefore, in all Tibetan areas and in the varying levels of schools, Tibetan



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language is gradually being replaced by Chinese. Tibetan language is given either only 50% or sometimes no weight at all in Tibet Autonomous Region university and college examinations. Prof. David Germano of Tibetan and Buddhist Studies at the University of Virginia remarks that this language policy is "one that simply consigns Tibetans to oblivion and to perpetual second class status."

Lack of access to adequate education and cultural discrimination has led many parents to sending their children to schools abroad, risking their lives on the escape routes crossing the Himalayan passes.

The crackdown of the authorities following the series of self-immolations is also affecting Tibetan schools. In April, one private Tibetan school in Kardze was closed down with the Principal and one English teacher being arrested. This school was dedicated to teaching Tibetan language and culture. In June, three teachers in Rebkong were removed from a local school on allegations of having participated in the wave of protests after the announcement of the new language policy. Students at this school had protested against the removal of their Tibetan schoolbooks, which had been secretly replaced with Chinese books during the spring vacation.

Even more concerning, authorities have not shown hesitation to arrest minors on suspicions of political dissent, who are facing the same cruel treatments in detention as adults.

Your Excellency, we are inviting you to visit, meet and view with your own eyes, and support our demands:

- Immediate termination of the plans to make Chinese Mandarin the primary language in Tibetan schools.
- Immediate end to the crackdown on Tibetan schools, and release of all Tibetan teaching staff and students from detention.
- The United Nations must discuss the issue of Tibet based on the resolutions that it has passed in 1959, 1961 and 1965, and continuously make efforts to fulfil the substance of these resolutions
- Send an independent fact-finding mission with unhindered access to Tibet

We would appreciate very much receiving a short answer to our non-violent appeals.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Yonten Gope:
Rapperswil /Jona Section of the TCSL

Copy: Mr. Ban Ki Moon, General Secretary of the United Nations

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