

Tibet Society Newsletter

April 2018

"If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito"
His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

News of the Tibet Society, what's happening in Tibet and the Tibetan Exile world, and news of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Liverpool FC: Keeping up the Pressure

The [campaign](#) to lobby Liverpool Football Club to pull out of its controversial deal with the Chinese company Tibet Water Resources Ltd has gained momentum as 25 Members of Parliament send the club an [open letter](#).

The Members of Parliament, who represent constituencies from across the United Kingdom and political spectrum, have called on the club to end its partnership and reaffirm its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. The partnership between Tibet Water and the football club is lucrative for both parties, offering a range of promotional and marketing rights.

The 25 parliamentarians say the deal "is not consistent" with the values promoted in Liverpool FC's human rights framework and that Tibet



Water is only able to operate in Tibet as a result of the Chinese occupation and the human rights violations that uphold it. They call on Liverpool FC "to terminate the agreement."

Tibet is well documented as living under one of the world's most repressive regimes. The Chinese government severely restricts all fundamental rights and freedoms of Tibetans living there and people continue to face arbitrary arrest, torture and indefinite detention.

MPs from the Liverpool area have also joined the campaign, including Stephen Twigg MP for Liverpool West Derby and Dan Carden MP for Liverpool Walton, who are understood to have written to the club expressing their concern about the partnership.

The Tibet Society, working with other Tibet advocacy groups in the UK and around the world, together with the international consumer group SumOfUs, launched the campaign calling for an end to the deal in October last year with letters to Liverpool FC and a petition signed by nearly 90,000 people, many of whom, including Liverpool fans, have contacted Liverpool FC directly.

To date, no response has been received from Liverpool FC.

Other News...

China's HR Review

This November, China will be held accountable for its human rights track record at the Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva as part of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of human rights records of all 193 UN Member States.

The Society, along with other Tibet advocacy groups in Britain and across the world, has submitted a report to the HRC for presentation at the Review, detailing China's current documented Human Rights transgressions and making recommendations to address the issues raised.

Sham Trial: 100 Days

April 14 marked the 100th day since Tashi Wangchuk's closed-door trial concluded on 4 January with no verdict reached by the court. The Society, together with other UK Tibet support groups and the Tibetan community in Britain joined the [protests](#) held around the world to garner public support and let the world know that we will not stand by silent as an innocent man is held prisoner.

[Tashi Wangchuk](#), 31, is a Tibetan businessman who was jailed for campaigning for the right of Tibetans to be educated in Tibetan. He faces up to 15 years in prison, despite his clear statement that he is not calling for Tibetan Independence.

Interns Appointed!

Two interns have been appointed for the Society's Parliamentary Internship programme, working with MPs Fabian Hamilton and Chris Law. More news next month!

The Panchen Lama: Still Missing



Gendun Choekyi Nyima – the [11th Panchen Lama of Tibet](#), who is being held in captivity in China – turned 29 on 25 April and the Society joined Tibetans and Tibet supporters in London to celebrate his birthday and campaign for his release with a [vigil](#) outside the Chinese Embassy.

The Panchen Lama is the second highest spiritual

leader of Tibet. Gendun Choekyi Nyima was abducted by the Chinese government at the age of six in 1995 shortly after being recognised by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama. Since then he has not been heard of and Tibetans in exile, international communities and human right groups have been calling for his release. He has been described as the youngest political prisoner in the world.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has made a statement

saying that he had information from a "reliable source" that the 11th Panchen Lama is still alive: "The Panchen Lama, whom I recognised, sometime back [...] according to reliable information, he is still alive and carrying on a normal education. So we will see".

Events were held around the world to mark the birthday. Students for a Free Tibet and Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in India lit 130,232 candles on a birthday cake – a candle for every Tibetan living in exile. The Tashi Lhunpo Monastery is the seat of the Panchen Lama lineage.

Tibet News



US Support

The United States Senate has unanimously supported a Special Resolution which calls for the right of Tibetan Buddhists to determine their own reincarnations saying, “Any attempt by the Government of the People’s Republic of China to identify or install its own candidate as a Tibetan Buddhist religious leader, including a future 15th Dalai Lama, is invalid interference in the right to religious freedom of Tibetan Buddhists around the world, including in Tibet as well as the United States and elsewhere”.

Special Resolution 429 is the first time that any national legislative body has called for the right of the Tibetan Buddhist faith community to determine its own reincarnations. It mentions China’s “severe repression of Tibet’s unique religious, cultural, and linguistic heritage” as well as “gross violations of human rights in Tibet”. It refers to His Holiness the Dalai Lama as “recognised around the world as a leading figure of moral and religious authority, and is the unrivaled spiritual and cultural leader of the Tibetan people” and states that followers of Tibetan Buddhism around the world “look to the Dalai Lama for religious leadership and spiritual guidance”.

Spystate

China is stepping up its surveillance capabilities by offering cash rewards to informers. Tibetans living in Tibet are being paid to “shop” neighbours, colleagues and acquaintances for “criminal” activities—such activities as promoting Tibet’s national culture and language, demanding greater religious freedom or being a member of a “criminal gang”—one which promotes “separatism” by supporting His Holiness the Dalai Lama or the Tibetan exile government’s Middle Way Policy.

To make these informers’ lives easier, China has set up a website for the public to report on anybody engaging in activities “endangering state security” which includes colluding with foreigners. China is determined to make it increasingly difficult for people to get news of what is happening in Tibet out to the rest of the world.

Their activities are not limited to Chinese soil—in Sweden Dorjee Gyantsan, 49, a Tibetan refugee living there, has been arrested on suspicion of spying on his fellow Tibetan refugees

living in Sweden. There is evidence to show he has been infiltrating the Tibetan community and passing on information to China in return for cash. Gyantsan denies the charges.

Detained in Tibet

Two monks from Tsang Dhodup Rabten Ling Monastery in the Qinghai Province of Tibet have been arrested, one was later released but the other, Woechung Gyatso, remains in detention. The two had attended a political education workshop on the new cyber security laws in China. They were later detained for sharing “politically sensitive information” on social media following an inspection of their phones.

A 60 year old woman, Lhamo Dolkar, was arrested as she travelled with relatives on a pilgrimage to Lhasa. It is assumed her detention is because she visited a political prisoner in jail six years ago to take him food. She has not been heard of since her detention. She is described as “an ordinary Tibetan woman with little political awareness and no formal education”.

A monk from Labrang Monastery in Gansu, Jinpa Gyatso, has been released after being held for ten days in secret for questioning. He was previously held for questioning last year around 10 March—Tibetan Uprising Day.

Football Crazy!

This year’s Gyalum Chenmo Memorial Gold Cup has been won by the Doeguling Youth Sports Association team from Mungod. The Gold Cup is the sports highlight of the year for Tibetans in exile and is fiercely contested by teams from all over India as well as Nepal and Canada. The tournament is organised by the Tibetan National Sports Association and it is where players are selected to play in the Tibetan National Football team—the official team representing Tibet in international tournaments.

Top Athlete

Choeyang Kyi, a Tibetan athlete, won a gold medal in the women’s 20km walking race at the International Association of Athletics Federation meet in Rio Maior, Portugal, representing China. Choeyang was the first ever Tibetan to win an Olympic medal when she competed in the 2012 Olympics. She comes from a nomadic family in Amdo in eastern Tibet.

“Thank You India”

This year is leading up to the 60th anniversary of the day His Holiness the Dalai Lama first set foot on Indian soil after his flight from Tibet and the Chinese occupation there. Tibetans in exile have named this the “Thank You India” year and are holding a series of events to celebrate. The launch on 31 March was a major success and attended by Indian leaders despite the Indian government’s instruction to Indian leaders to avoid it. Tibet is seen as being used as a tool by India in her volatile relationship with China. At the moment they want to cement relations as Indian Prime Minister Modi gears up for his forthcoming trip to China so they want to be seen to shun the Dalai Lama. When China’s troops cross the border onto Indian soil and set up camp, India fetes His Holiness and Sikyong Lobsang Sangay, the political leader of the Tibetan exile community.

Macron Kowtows to China

French President Emmanuel Macron has said he will not meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama as it would trigger a “crisis” with China. The *Daily Mail* has reported that Macron said he would consult Beijing before meeting His Holiness as otherwise it would send a signal to China which would be “useless and counter-productive”. He said he had found the Dalai Lama “very inspiring” when he met him before becoming President of France. Regarding hopes of reopening talks between the Dalai Lama and China, Macron said, “I will do my best”.

Villagers Detained

More than 30 Tibetans who were opposing Chinese mining operations on the sacred Sebtra Dzogen mountain near their village in Driru County have been detained for leaking information about the mining to the outside world. There are reports that they have been beaten in custody.

Under the Spotlight

Two reports just published detail increasing suppression of human rights in China. The US State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour and watchdog organisation Freedom House have both reported on China’s oppressive regime and specifically mention Tibet.



Tibet Society News

Two Invitations!

The next [meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group](#) Tibet (APPGT) is on 9 May at 2pm. All are welcome, please contact Gloria Montgomery (see below) for more information if you would like to come. The meeting will take place in Committee Room 21 in the Palace of Westminster.

Matteo Mecacci, President of the [International Campaign for Tibet](#) (ICT), will be over from American to present an upcoming ICT report on access to Tibet, brief on new developments in Washington and the Reciprocal Access bill, and provide insight into how the UK government can press for a more reciprocal and fair relationship with China.

This is the second APPGT meeting this year and will be a roundtable discussion on the issue of access to Tibet and the diplomatic concept of reciprocity. In addition to being a human rights concern, the issue of access is also a deeply political one. While Chinese citizens, diplomats, journalists and NGOs traveling to the UK have unimpeded access to all of the UK, the same cannot be said of UK citizens visiting Tibetan areas.

The [APPGT](#) is one of the ways the Society can effectively work with MPs to inform them of the issues and lobby them to take action. Meetings are open to the public and this is a great way to become involved in the Society's work.

What is an [All Party Parliamentary Group](#)? An APPG consists of Members of both Houses who join together to pursue a particular topic or interest.

Raising the Tibetan Flag

Come and raise the Tibetan flag on [6 May in Milton Keynes](#) at 1.30. The event demonstrates solidarity with Tibetans in Tibet who cannot even possess an image of their flag on a mobile phone without risk of arrest and imprisonment. This is an annual fun event and is followed by film, music, speeches, tea and cake...

More Society News.....

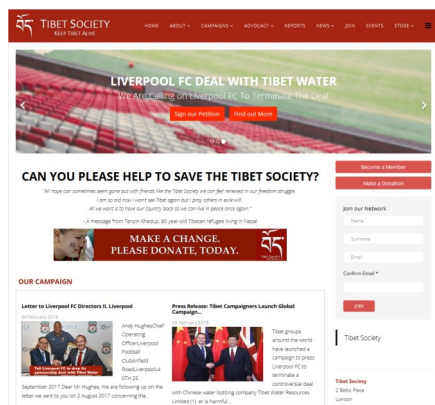
Society President Norman Baker's letter to *The Times* has drawn attention to the Tibetan-themed play *Pa La* which has been shelved by London's Royal Court Theatre – "on the advice of the British Council". The theatre said earlier this year the play—by award winning Indian playwright Abishek Majumdar—would be staged next year but have now reneged on that decision. The decision is to avoid upsetting a joint arts programme with China.

Society representatives took part in a UK-China Human Rights Roundtable discussion with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The meeting, which took place on 10 April, was an opportunity for the FCO to update us on the Prime Minister's visit to China at the end of January and to discuss the latest human rights developments in China.

The Society is taking part in the campaign to draw attention to what the Confucius Institutes in our schools and universities are really up to. American universities are closing them down—lets persuade ours to do the same! Watch this space!

Our Website is Live!

Our new website is up and running! Check it out and tell us what you think. Thank you all for your patience while the revamp has taken place and our heartfelt thanks go to Geleg Pangri who did all the hard work.



www.tibetsociety.org

Keeping you up to date

This is the second issue of our new monthly Tibet Society newsletter—let us know what you think! We love to hear from you!

And do pass it on to anybody you think might be interested, it's a good way of spreading the word.

Want to Know More?

Do you want to find out more? There is a wealth of information online, check out these websites:

- [Free Tibet](#)—our partner UK-based Tibet support group
- [The UK Tibetan Community](#)
- [Tibetan Government-in-Exile](#)
- His Holiness the Dalai Lama's [official website](#)
- [Contact magazine](#)—up to date news of Tibet and Tibetan issues

Tibet Writings

The [High Peaks Pure Earth](#) website provides commentary on Tibet-related news and issues as well as translations from writings in Tibetan and Chinese posted on blogs and social media from Tibet and the People's Republic of China—including that of the acclaimed Tibetan writer [Woesser](#). Woesser's blog is enormously popular—she is a Tibetan living in Beijing and is continually harassed by the Chinese government for her courageous writings, spending much of her life under house arrest.

Get Involved!

We value every single member of the Society, it is your support that enables us to carry on with our work for Tibet. Would you like to get more involved? One very effective way you can get involved is to persuade just one person to join the Society: every name counts when we lobby on behalf of you all.

What else can you do? Join our vigils, protests and events, it sends a powerful message and its fun! Or could you help with research or writing?

The Tibet Society, the world's first Tibet support group, was founded in 1959. Funded by its members, it has been working for over 50 years to seek justice for Tibet through parliamentary lobbying, campaigns and actions.

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