



Statement of the Kashag on the Sixty-fourth Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day

Today is the sixty-fourth anniversary of the Tibetan People's Uprising against the occupation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1959, the thirty-fourth anniversary of the PRC's imposition of the first martial law in Tibet in 1989 after three successive annual mass protests in Tibet's capital Lhasa and the fifteenth anniversary of the peaceful protests that erupted across the three traditional provinces of Tibet in 2008. On this solemn occasion, we remember and honour our compatriots and martyrs who have given their lives for the cause of Tibet. We stand in solidarity with their family members and with those who are still suffering under the oppression of the PRC's occupation.

We extend warm welcome to our distinguished guests comprising of four-member European Parliamentary delegation led by Mr Mikulas Peksa, nine-member Parliamentary delegation of Mexico led by Mr. Salvador Caro Cabrera, members of Tibet Support Groups, Mr. Arunas Valinskas, Member of Parliament, Lithuania, and Mr. Damon Wilson, President of National Endowment for Democracy. We wholeheartedly thank them for coming all the way to join with us on this momentous occasion as a gesture of their political support for the Tibetan people.

Sixty-four years ago, on this day, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was invited to a theatrical show at the Chinese military headquarters in Lhasa. Against the tradition, His Holiness was ordered to attend the show accompanied by a limited number of unarmed guards. When this information reached the Tibetan people, they rose in unison in mass uprising to implore His Holiness the Dalai Lama not to attend the show and to protest against the repressive policies unleashed by the PRC government in Tibet. The uprising broke out as memories of the so-called democratic reforms imposed in Kham and Amdo few years ago were still vivid. Tibetans were subjected to simultaneous land reform and cooperative system by confiscating their land, livestock and means of production in the name of collectivisation and raising the taxes. In the name of religious reform, monks and nuns were forced to disrobe and monasteries were demolished. When Tibetans protested, lamas and lay leaders were imprisoned through deception. Tibetans were massacred and suppressed by labelling them as "bandits" and "rebels". The Tibetans also witnessed how the PRC leadership in Tibet blatantly violated the terms of the 17-Point Agreement for about eight years.

The Tibetan National Uprising averted the visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan spiritual and political leaders to the Chinese army camp, thus turning the fate of the Tibetan people. Guarded by Tibet's deities and oracles and escorted by soldiers of the Tibetan National Army and Chushi Gangdruk Defenders of the Faith Volunteer Army, His Holiness the Dalai Lama along with ministers of the Kashag safely made their way into exile in freedom, followed by some 80,000 Tibetans, including Tibetan government officials. It laid an unshakable foundation for Tibetans in their spirit and courage to resist every attempt made by the PRC government to erase the Tibetan national identity.

The invasion of Tibet by the Chinese Communist Government led to the death of an estimated 1.2 million Tibetans, destruction of more than 6,000 monasteries, as well as deforestation and destruction of wildlife and exploitation of mineral resources. Failing to learn lessons from the immense destruction caused to Tibet, the PRC authorities are repeating the mistake and even blindly carrying out harmful actions to cover its guilt.

In the 1980s, while implementing reform and opening-up policy, Deng Xiaoping put forward his strategic thinking on development based on two overall situations. Firstly, to open up and develop the eastern coastal areas with the help of central and western regions. Secondly, the coastal areas in turn help accelerate the development of the central and western regions when they reach a level of moderate prosperity in late 1990s. However, at the start of the new millennium, the so-called Western China Development Programme was implemented. The "Programme" involved projects such as West-to-East Power Transmission, West-to-East Gas Pipeline, Qinghai-Tibet railway, Returning Farmland to Forest and Grazing to Grasslands, infrastructure development and so on. In reality, these are colonial policies aimed at exploiting the resources of the western region and maintaining national security rather than improving the livelihood of the local people. Looking at the programme being implemented for a targeted period of fifty years, there are hardly any projects which are of real benefit for Tibet and Tibetan people's livelihood. Hence, Deng Xiaoping's strategic thinking on development has become an empty slogan. Not only has the wealth gap between China and Tibet grown wider, the Tibetan region and Tibetans have today become a mere romanticized objects for wealthy Chinese. Today, Xi Jinping continues to advocate common prosperity, but how long will it take to see it materialize is difficult for anyone to say.

To consolidate sense of community for the Chinese nation, the PRC government is currently implementing a policy of one nation, one culture, one religion and one language through Sincisation of Tibetan Buddhism and promotion of Chinese language across Tibet. Tibetan children are forced into a vast network of colonial-style kindergartens and boarding schools to learn Chinese language and way of life. The PRC government is enforcing an assimilationist language policy in these schools in complete disregard of the universally-adopted education system and international human rights standards. In a report on 6 February this year, the United Nations Independent Experts voiced alarm over the PRC government's policy aimed at assimilating over a million Tibetan children culturally, religiously and linguistically through a residential school system. The so-called Tibet Statistical Year Book 2021 recorded 4,491 pre-primary school children in 2000, which has sharply risen to 23,414 in 2010 and 150,934 in 2020.

To speed up assimilation, marriages between Tibetans and Chinese are rewarded to promote "model family of ethnic harmony." Likewise, thousands of Tibetan children are being sent to so-called Tibetan schools in Chinese areas. In the name of job placement, mass transfer of young Tibetans as surplus laborers to Chinese areas are undertaken on a large scale. There is massive increase in the number of Chinese officials and work teams being sent to the Tibetan areas. Moreover, 5,570 Tibetan residents of Chone County and Batse County were forcibly relocated to Guazhou County in Jiuquan on the pretext of dam construction and water conservation in their regions. 2,257 families in Drukchu County were resettled in Lanzhou Xinqu in the name of migration for ecological conservation. Furthermore, Tibetans in Tsoe City, Thewo County and Chone County are set to be relocated. 13,415 local residents were displaced due to hydropower projects under the Ministry of Water Resources on Gyalmo Ngulchu (Salween), Nyagchu (Yalung) and Zachu (Mekong) rivers. Similarly, more than

13,000 Tibetans in Ngaba Prefecture were relocated and over 3,000 are planned to be displaced. These mass relocation of Tibetans are equivalent to Stalin's policy of forced resettlement of millions of ethnic minorities over many decades in the 1930s which was declared illegal and criminal repressive acts by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on 14 November 1989.

Similarly, over 100,000 Tibetan nomads from about twenty counties in Nagchu, Ngari and Shigatse prefectures were relocated to City No. 4 constructed in Sinburi in Gongkar County in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). It raises serious doubt and suspicion as to how will this project provide sustainable livelihood for the relocated people and for what purpose will their native land be used for.

The PRC government, in the name of combating separatism and maintaining social stability, is controlling every movement of Tibetans with measures more draconian than the time of the Cultural Revolution. Every town, village, street, pastoral areas and grasslands are constantly surveilled using latest technology through Grid Management System. Last month, a so-called "Regulations on Network and Information Security" in TAR came into force. It tasked government departments, state and public organs above the county level to monitor and control information on the internet. The regulation criminalises even forming and participating in social media group with "separatist forces". The Chinese government has intensified its campaign of forcibly indoctrinating Tibetans including students, nomads, farmers and even monks and nuns with communist ideology. Large-scale collection of data from Tibetans through DNA extraction, Iris scan and facial recognition are being carried in the name of social management.

In March last year, 81-year-old Taphun died after setting himself on fire in front of the police station near Kirti Monastery in northeastern Tibet in protest against the PRC government's repressive policies. He became the 157th confirmed and known Tibetan to self-immolate in Tibet since 2009. The Kashag again appeals to the Tibetans to preserve their lives in order to contribute all their energy for the cause of Tibet.

Extremely concerning reports of enforced disappearance and extrajudicial imprisonment of Tibetan writers, intellectuals, language advocates, human rights and environmental activists and those advocating against animal slaughter continue to emerge from Tibet. Tibetan political prisoners are released in failing health condition and are kept under constant surveillance. Last July, Jigme Gyatso, a former political prisoner arrested during the 2008 pan-Tibetan protest, died of poor health. Another former political prisoner, Geshe Tenzin Palsang, who was sentenced to prison in 2012, passed away last September. A Tibetan was reportedly beaten to death by the Chinese police for allegedly carrying groceries to an old age home. Tibetans are beaten to death for simply performing religious activities. Also, arrest of Tibetans for keeping photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama continues unabated.

The whereabouts of the Eleventh Panchen Lama Tenzin Gedhun Yeshe Thinley, popularly called Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, still remain unknown following his abduction by the Chinese authorities in 1995. The Central Tibetan Administration will make every effort to seek the immediate release of the Eleventh Panchen Lama and other Tibetan political prisoners and appeal for continued support from the governments, human rights organizations and individuals. We thank everyone who takes initiative in this advocacy campaign.

The Law of the People's Republic of China on National Regional Autonomy stipulates that the chairman and vice-chairman of the regional congress, chief and deputy chief prosecutors of the

People's Procuratorates, president and vice-president of the People's Court of the national autonomous areas, heads of the autonomous regions, prefectures and counties should be those from the nationality exercising regional autonomy in that area. However, in the so-called TAR, the representation of Tibetans in the leadership at the county, prefectural and regional levels is barely 43%. And if the roughly 80% Tibetans who make to the powerless bodies like political consultative conference is not taken into account, the percentage of Tibetan representation will definitely be much lower. In the overall leadership of the "TAR", about 10% are so-called Chinese cadres aiding Tibet dispatched from China, which shows how much authority the PRC government gives to the Tibetans to govern themselves. Similarly, in the last year alone, around 139 Tibetan officials in the "TAR" were placed under investigation and expelled under the pretext of transgression of law and corruption. Many suspect this as the Chinese government's established mechanism aimed at stifling capable and promising Tibetan officials and the skills and potential of the Tibetans. The current year report of the so-called People's Procuratorate of the TAR reported the investigation in some cases from 1990, which completely disregards the judicial prosecution period.

Tibet's capital Lhasa was placed under severe lockdown continuously for over 100 days last year under the zero-Covid policy, causing enormous hardship in the people's daily life which pushed some to even commit suicide. Some were also arrested for distributing videos and information on the situation and their whereabouts remain unknown. According to information trickling out from Tibet, after the sudden lifting of the lockdown in December 2022, many Tibetans died due to lack of medical facilities as large number of dead bodies were seen being carried to the crematorium daily. The offices of the Central Tibetan Administration and Tibetan community held weekly prayer services for the deceased and for those affected by the pandemic.

Looking for the welfare and respecting the aspirations of the people is the basic condition for a government to earn legitimacy. Hence, if a government flagrantly implement policies of eradicating a nationality, then the people have the natural right to protest the government's policy and even reject the government for their own protection.

The Central Tibetan Administration is hoping to find a mutually-agreeable way forward to discuss Tibet's future status based on the Middle-Way Policy. In this regard, we are ready to engage with the PRC government based on equality and friendship to seek a mutually beneficial and lasting solution. Moreover, we urge the PRC government to immediately stop its flawed policy of eradicating the Tibetan identity.

We welcome the reintroduction of the bipartisan and bicameral Bill of Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Conflict in both the Houses of the US Congress in February 2023 by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul, Congressman Jim McGovern, Senator Jeff Merkley and Senator Todd Young. It will reinvigorate the hope and determination of the Tibetan people. The Bill is aimed at finding a resolution to Sino-Tibet conflict while recognising the true historical status of Tibet and urgency of the current situation. Similarly, on 14 December, the Canadian Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution endorsing the Middle-Way Approach and supporting the resumption of a dialogue between the Tibetan representatives and the PRC government. The said Bill and Resolution will certainly give meaningful leverage to the Middle-Way Approach as a win-win solution to the Sino-Tibet conflict.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama emphasises the cultivation of love, compassion and concern for the well-being of others with a sense of oneness of humanity. If we can practice his advice in

our daily lives, it will certainly pacify the enmity in this world engulfed in war and overcome the problems of natural calamity, pandemic, and famine.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is not only the protector and symbol of Tibet and the Tibetan people, but also an unparalleled leader revered across the world for his commitment to promote human values and religious harmony, preservation of Tibet's Buddhist culture and revival of ancient Indian knowledge. We will resolutely oppose the PRC government's baseless accusations of labelling His Holiness the Dalai Lama as separatist and every attempt to obstruct His Holiness's meritorious service for the world. Moreover, the PRC government will lose the key to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict if it fails to positively recognise the historic bond between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people and the reality of the current situation.

I would like to take this opportunity to express the Tibetan people's sincere gratitude and appreciation to India for providing us a second home and its unwavering support as well as to the United States and other Governments, Parliamentary Tibet Support Groups including the newly-formed Parliamentary Tibet Support Groups in Mexico and Spain following the Eighth World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet, Tibet Support Groups and individuals who support truth and justice. We also thank the Tibetan Associations, Voluntary Tibetan Advocacy Groups and Non-governmental Organizations for their voluntary advocacy campaigns.

Finally, I pray for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the simultaneous fulfillment of all his wishes. May the truth of Tibet prevail soon and peace spread across the world.

The Kashag
10 March 2023