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མང་གཙོ་འཕེལ་ཁྱེས་
ལྗོངས་ལྟེ་གནས་ཁང་།

**TIBETAN
CENTRE FOR
HUMAN
RIGHTS AND
DEMOCRACY**

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Date: 22 April 2002

Dr. Diego Garcia Sayan
Chairperson – Rapporteur
UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance
Office of the Commission for Human Rights
c/o OHCHR-UNOG
CH - 1211, Geneva 10
Switzerland

Dear Dr. Diego Garcia Sayan,

Sub: Appeal for action on Gendun Choekyi Nyima (the XI Panchen Lama) who turns 13 on April 25 2002.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) would like to thank the Working Group for all its efforts on behalf of Tibetans. TCHRD strongly believes that the persistent efforts of Working Group and other UN bodies have contributed to the release of few prominent political prisoners of Tibet in recent times, namely Tanak Jigme Sangpo, Chadrel Rinpoche, and Ngawang Choephel. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and other dedicated staff members.

The recent release of Tibetan political prisoners is a proof that the authorities of China are taking heed of the opinion of the international community regarding the plight of Tibetans inside Tibet. Encouraged by these recent developments, TCHRD would like to plead for a renewed and resolute action on Panchen Lama, whose 13th birthday falls on 25 April 2002.

On 14 May 1995, the Dalai Lama announced the then six-old Gendun Choekyi as the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, thus becoming the XI Panchen Lama. The Panchen Lama is the second senior-most lama of Tibet after the Dalai Lama. Shortly after this announcement Gendun Choekyi Nyima and his family were taken from their home in Lhari County, Nagchu, to Beijing. Their whereabouts have been unknown ever since.

The case was prominently reported in the Working Group report E/CN.4/1997/34 and E/CN.4/1999/62. The Working Group report E/CN.4/1997/34 quoted Chinese officials responding, that “ At present they (the eleventh Panchen Lama and his parents) are leading normal lives and enjoying perfect health”. However the Chinese authorities have still not disclosed the whereabouts of the family. Many Tibetans fear that the eleventh Panchen Lama is actually no longer alive.

The Panchen Lama's continued status of disappearance is an affront on the religious sentiment of all Tibetan people. Since he is held to be the reincarnation of the tenth Panchen Lama he needs to be educated and instructed in Buddhist line of education, according to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. This teaching is obviously being denied.

The child reaches age thirteen on 25 April 2002. In May 2002 it will be seven years since his disappearance.

We appeal to the Working Group to once again to seek information regarding the whereabouts of Gendun Choekyi Nyima. We ask that the Chinese Government permit UN representative to meet with Gendun Choekyi Nyima so that the world may be assured of his health.

Thank you once again for your time and efforts.

Sincerely yours



Ugyen Tsewang
Information Officer

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