



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

Zurich, 11th February 2013

Defender of Human Rights – 8th Action of the second year of the TCSL 2-year Campaign

**Appeal to UN to send an independent fact-finding mission to Tibet now!
Appeal to UN: "End the forced resettlement of nomads!"**

Your Excellency

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.

The local Tibetan community sections of Wädenswil and Zurich together with their supporters will demand an end to the forced resettlement of Tibetan nomads, depriving them of their right to subsistence and cultural identity. We kindly invite you to come and visit us at the site in front of the Palais Wilson, Lake side on February 15th, from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm.

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.

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; while their livestock are being blamed for overgrazing the grasslands. On the contrary, these 'drogpas' were the first stewards of these vast grasslands and have successfully maintained a sustainable and mobile lifestyle for many centuries.



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It is estimated that since 2000 around 250,000 nomads have been forced into urban settlements by Chinese the 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 to be relocated to poorly built concrete houses. The nomads have no choice but abandon their traditional lifestyle with many driven to poverty, frustration and despair. Joblessness and alcoholism amongst the youth are prevalent. 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. While the central government boasts that it has made sizable investments in elevating the lifestyles of local residents, the outcome is exactly the opposite. The current policy of forced resettlement is in fact a very strategic move on the part of the state to keep all the mobile pastoral wanderers in tight leash and to have open access to pastures for extractive industries without facing any resentment, thus accelerating the ongoing environmental destruction.



We urgently appeal to you, Your Excellency, and to the United Nations to support our demands to:

- **Send an independent fact-finding mission with unhindered access to Tibet**
- **Put an immediate end to the forced resettlements of nomads**
- **Respect the nomads' right to choose their means of subsistence**
- **Engage in a meaningful consultation with the nomads on all available options in order to combine the knowledge of the nomadic herders in the preservation of their territories**
- **To call on China to resume the dialogue with the Tibetan Representatives in order to find a mutually agreeable solution to longstanding political problems**

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Norbu Chhiring:
Wädenswil Section of the TCSL

Mrs Sandrine Memmishofer-Pasang:
Zurich Section of the TCSL
Head of external Affairs


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