



Tibetan Community in Switzerland & Liechtenstein

Tibeter Gemeinschaft in der Schweiz & Liechtenstein

**4th action of the second year of the Tibetan Community in Switzerland and Liechtenstein
for a 2-year campaign since May 30, 2011:
UN to send an independent fact-finding mission to Tibet now!
"Stop Cultural Genocide"
On 19th October 2012 from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Place des Nations**

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.

Tibetans from the sections Lucerne and Trogen/St. Gallen and their supporters will be alerting the public to the ongoing destruction of the rich Tibetan cultural heritage.

Many measures of the Chinese government that at a first glance impress as aiming at "economic development" or environmental protection are in fact annihilating the unique Tibetan culture. Above all, the mass immigration of Chinese workers, accelerated by the completion of the railway line to Lhasa, is threatening Tibetan culture and identity. Attracted by economic incentives, for example to set up businesses, Tibetans are becoming increasingly marginalized in professional life.

The forced resettlement of Nomads, officially justified by alleged overgrazing of the grasslands, in reality aims at increasing political control over them when they are sedenterized. With this, they lose the basis of self-subsistence with many driven into unemployment and despair. It is estimated that by 2013 all of the 2 million nomads will have been resettled, and another aspect of Tibetan culture may be eradicated.

Exercise of Tibetan religion, a centrepiece of Tibetan culture, is becoming increasingly threatened. Many monasteries have effectively been shut down in the wave of repression following the self-immolations during the past 18 months. Other monasteries have been left by the monks or nuns, as they were not able to pursue even basic religious studies and exercise due to continuing harassment by authorities and security forces. Most of those monasteries, where religious practice has not been completely paralyzed, are controlled by a secular administration and are nothing more than showcases for tourists. Any more serious and in-depth religious studies are suppressed as soon as they are perceived as a threat to the Party and the government.

Not only the traditional culture, but also contemporary culture and arts are becoming increasingly suppressed. Since 2008 several young Tibetan intellectuals and artists, who have only recently been praised as model citizens for their cultural activities, have been arrested. These arrests have encountered a dramatic acceleration since the onset of the self-immolations. Recently many Tibetans who are adhering to the "Lhakar" movement have been arrested. "Lhakar", or "White Wednesday", is a loose movement that calls on speaking only Tibetan, using traditional Tibetan clothing and eating Tibetan meals on Wednesdays of each week.

Another threat to Tibetan culture stems from plans to implement Mandarin as the main medium of instruction in the schools of Qinghai province. This will not only accelerate the marginalization of Tibetan language, but in fact downgrade Tibetan to a "second language" and poses a major threat to the children developing their genuine Tibetan cultural identity. Rightly, His Holiness the Dalai Lama is calling all these measures "cultural genocide".

We call on the United Nations to stop the Cultural Genocide in Tibet!

Contact: Mr. Kelsang Genpotsang, Cell phone: 076 308 12 93

Tibetan Community in Switzerland & Liechtenstein, Binzstrasse 15, CH-8045 Zürich, Switzerland

www.tibetswiss.ch