



THE DALAI LAMA

MESSAGE

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to my dear friend, Vaclav Havel and members of the 'Shared Concern Initiative' for their concern over the recent sad turn of events in Tibet and for calling on the Chinese authorities to exercise restraint in dealing with the demonstrations. I also thank you for holding a candle light vigil this evening in Prague.

Since the Chinese Government has accused me of orchestrating these protests in Tibet, I call for a thorough investigation by a respected body, which should include Chinese representatives, to look into these allegations. Such a body would need to visit Tibet, the traditional Tibetan areas outside the Tibet Autonomous Region, and also the Central Tibetan Administration here in India. In order for the international community, and especially the more than one billion Chinese people who do not have access to uncensored information, to find out what is really going on in Tibet, it would be of tremendously helpful if representatives of the international media also undertook such investigations.

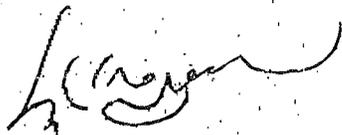
Whether it was intended or not, I believe that a form of cultural genocide has taken place in Tibet, where the Tibetan identity has been under constant attack. Tibetans have been reduced to an insignificant minority in their own land as a result of the huge transfer of non-Tibetans into Tibet. The distinctive Tibetan cultural heritage with its characteristic language, customs and traditions is fading away. Instead of working to unify its nationalities, the Chinese government discriminates against these minority nationalities, the Tibetans among them.

It is common knowledge that Tibetan monasteries, which constitute our principal seats of learning, besides being the repository of Tibetan Buddhist culture, have been severely reduced in both in number and population. In those monasteries that do still exist, serious study of Tibetan Buddhism is no longer allowed; in fact, even admission to these centres of learning is being strictly regulated. In reality, there is no religious freedom in Tibet. Even to call for a little more freedom is to risk being labeled a separatist. Nor is there any real autonomy in Tibet, even though these basic freedoms are guaranteed by the Chinese constitution.

I believe the demonstrations and protests taking place in Tibet are a spontaneous outburst of public resentment built up by years of repression in defiance of authorities that are oblivious to the sentiments of the local populace. I do not believe that more repressive measures will achieve the declared aim of unity and stability in the long term. I believe the best way forward is to resolve the issues through dialogue, as I have long been advocating, and I appreciate your support for this process too.

On our part, we remain committed to taking the Middle Way approach and pursuing a process of dialogue in order to find a mutually beneficial solution to the Tibetan issue.

With my prayers and good wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Lama', written in dark ink.

March 19, 2008