



27 February 2023

To His Excellency Yoshimasa Hayashi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan; and Honorable G20 Foreign Ministers,

Re: China's Colonial Boarding Schools in Tibet

We, a coalition of over 125 Tibet-related rights groups, are writing to you ahead of the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting in New Delhi urging you to take firm joint action concerning the Chinese government's relentless colonisation of Tibet and attempts to eradicate Tibetans' distinct identity.

Occupied for over seven decades, China's rule in Tibet is one of the last remnants of 20th-century colonialism. This is epitomised by a vast and alarming system of colonial boarding schools and preschools housing close to 1-million Tibetan children. This equates to three out of every four Tibetan students ages 6-18 being separated from their parents and communities and living under state control.¹ On top of this, it is estimated at least 100-150K four-and five-year-olds in rural areas are being forced to attend boarding preschools - where they must sleep - at least 5 nights a week - away from the care and protection of their parents.

On 6 February 2023 a group of UN human rights experts released a statement expressing alarm concerning "the residential school system for Tibetan children [that] appears to act as a mandatory large-scale programme intended to assimilate Tibetans into majority Han culture, contrary to international human rights standards."²

Further concern was raised by The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in Geneva expert committee members reiterated strong concern about the erosion of Tibetan language "in the push for a unified curriculum and the national common language policy". This policy has resulted in Tibetan being replaced by Chinese as the medium of instruction in schools throughout Tibet, including in kindergartens where "Tibetan children as

¹ "Separated From Their Families, Hidden From the World: China's Vast System of Colonial Boarding Schools Inside Tibet", Tibet Action Institute, 2021: https://tibetaction.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2021_TAI_ColonialBoardingSchoolReport_Digital.pdf

² UN experts alarmed by separation of 1 million Tibetan children from families and forced assimilation at residential schools, 6 February 2023, [https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/02/china-un-experts-alarmed-separation-1-million-tibetan-children-families-and#:~:text=GENEVA%20\(6%20February%202023\)%20%E2%80%93.%2C%20UN%20experts%20warned%20today](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/02/china-un-experts-alarmed-separation-1-million-tibetan-children-families-and#:~:text=GENEVA%20(6%20February%202023)%20%E2%80%93.%2C%20UN%20experts%20warned%20today)

young as four to six are being sent to boarding schools where they are completely deprived of access to their language and their culture.”³

By intentionally uprooting Tibetan children from their families and culture, making them live in state-run boarding schools, the Chinese authorities are using one of the most heinous tools of colonisation to attack Tibetan identity. While China claims to be educating Tibetan children, the world knows what it looks like when children are pushed into residential schools run by a state that wants to wipe out their culture, including high levels of alienation, loss of identity, and intergenerational trauma.

Given the gravity and urgency of this situation, we call on G20 leaders to address this attack on Tibetan identity with Chinese leaders in both multi-lateral and bi-lateral meetings. We further call on you to release a robust joint statement of concern that:

- 1) Urges the Chinese government to halt the residential boarding school and preschool system in Tibet and to uphold the current constitutional and statutory protections for Tibetan language promotion and preservation.
- 2) Denounces China’s attempts to eradicate Tibetans’ distinct identity, including their language, culture, history, and way of life.

Together your governments are uniquely positioned to exercise strong and direct influence on China's leadership. By acting in unison, you will not only increase your influence over Beijing, but this common approach will provide participating governments with a greater measure of protection from China's efforts to impose its authoritarian influence on our own democracies.

We look forward to your urgent response on this request.

Yours sincerely

Yoko Ishii
Free Tibet Fukuoka

Tsering Dorjee
Students for a Free Tibet Japan

Mandie McKeown
International Tibet Network

³ The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) is the body of 18 independent experts that monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights by its State parties. The Covenant enshrines economic, social and cultural rights such as the rights to adequate food, adequate housing, education, health, social security, water and sanitation, and work. The Committee seeks to develop a constructive dialogue with State parties, determine whether the Covenant's norms are being applied, and assess how the implementation and enforcement of the Covenant could be improved so all people can enjoy these rights in full.
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2023/02/committee-economic-social-and-cultural-rights-commends-china-efforts-reduce-poverty>

The letter supported by 131 G20 and global Tibet groups and organisations, listed below:

<p>Argentina CADAL</p> <p>Australia Australia Tibet Council Tibetan Community of Victoria Tibetan Community, Queensland Sakya Trinley Ling Tibet Action Group of Western Tibet Support Group Adelaide</p> <p>Brazil RangZen: Movimento Tibete Livre Centro De Cultura Tibetana</p> <p>Canada Canada Tibet Committee Students for a Free Tibet – Canada Tibetan Cultural Association – Quebec</p> <p>European Union Casa del Tibet – Spain Czechs Support Tibet, International Campaign for Tibet Phagma Drolma - Arya Tara Les Amis du Tibet Luxembourg Save Tibet Austria Tibet Support Group - Ireland Tibet Support Group – Netherlands Tibetan Community Austria Tibetan Community in Ireland EcoTibet Ireland Lungta Association Belgium Friends of Tibet in Finland Norwegian Tibet Committee Tibet Support Committee Denmark Tibetan Community in Denmark Tibetan Community Sweden Students for a Free Tibet Denmark Save Tibet Foundation Swedish Tibet Committee Tibet cesky Tibetan Programme of The Other Space Foundation TSG – Slovenia Tibetan Youth Association in Europe Grupo de Apoio ao Tibete, Portugal</p>	<p>India [Cont.] Tibet Friendship Society - Bihar Tibet Friendship Society - Dashthrathpuni Tibet Friendship Society - Delhi Tibet Friendship Society - Muzaffarpur National Campaign for Tibetan Support National Democratic Party of Tibet Students for a Free Tibet India Tibet Lives Tibetan Women's Association The Youth Liberation Front of Tibet, East-Turkestan, Manchuria & Inner-Mongolia Tibetan Youth Congress Tibet Friendship Society, Bharrat Tibbat Sahyog Manch</p> <p>Indonesia Roof of the World Foundation</p> <p>Italy Associazione Italia-Tibet Tibetan Community of Italy</p> <p>Japan Dream for Children Tibet Support Group Kiku Japan Association of Monks for Tibet (Super Sangha)</p> <p>Mexico Casa Tibet México Voces de Tibet</p> <p>United Kingdom Free Tibet Tibet Solidarity Tibetan Community in Britain</p> <p>United States Association Cognizance Tibet, North Carolina Bay Area Friends of Tibet Boston Tibet Network Committee of 100 for Tibet International Tibet Independence Movement Santa Barbara Friends of Tibet Sierra Friends of Tibet</p>
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Les Amis du Tibet – Belgium

France

Aide aux Refugies Tibetains

Association Drôme Ardèche-Tibet

Briancon05 Urgence Tibet

France-Tibet

Lions Des Neiges Mont Blanc

Maison des Himalayas

Maison du Tibet – Tibet Info

Objectif Tibet

Passeport Tibetain

Students for a Free Tibet – France

Tashi Delek Bordeaux

Tibetan Community France

Germany

International Society of Human Rights,
Munich

Tibetan Association of Germany

Tibet Initiative Deutschland

India

Anterrashtriya Bharat - Tibbet Sahyog Samiti

Balijara Foundation - Maharashtra

Bharat Tibet Sangh - India

Bharat Tibet Sangh - Jammu

Bharat Tibbat Sahyog Manch

Bharat Tibbat Samanvay Sangh

Core Group for Tibetan Cause, India

Foundation for Universal Responsibility of H.

H. the Dalai Lama

Ganasamannay Kolkata

Himalayan Committee for Action on Tibet -

Kinnaur Tibet Friendship and Cooperation

Society

India Tibet Friendship Society - India

Students for a Free Tibet

Tibet Committee of Fairbanks

Tibet Action Institute

Tibet Justice Center

Tibetan Association of Ithaca

Tibetan Association of Northern California

Tibetan Association of Philadelphia

Tibetans of Mixed Heritage

TIBETmichigan

United Nations for a Free Tibet (UNFFT)

U.S. Tibet Committee

Rest of the World

Swiss Tibetan Friendship Association

Comite de Apoyo al Tibet

Amigos de Tibet, Colombia

Amigos del Tibet - Chile

Amigos del Tibet - El Salvador

Asociación Cultural Peruano Tibetana

Asociación Cultural Tibetano Costarricense

Friends of Tibet - Costa Rica

Le Club Français - Paraguay

Tibet Group - Panama

Tíbet Patria Libre - Uruguay

World League for Freedom and Democracy

Circle of Friends - Philippines

Israeli Friends of the Tibetan People

Tibet Support Group Kenya

Tibet Rescue Initiative in Africa

Friends of Tibet New Zealand

Taiwan Friends of Tibet

Human Rights Network for Tibet and Taiwan

Students for a Free Tibet Taiwan