



14 February 2025

H.E. Volker Türk
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
Palais Wilson, 52 rue des Pâquis
CH-1201 Geneva, Switzerland

Re: Over 340,000 Call on You to Break the Silence on Tibet's Residential Boarding School Crisis

Dear High Commissioner Volker Türk,

We are writing to you on behalf of over 140 global Tibet groups, supported by more than 340,000 persons who have signed a joint petition with the Tibet Advocacy Coalition and AVAAZ.¹ As of 14 February 2025, over 340,000 concerned individuals have urgently called on you to publicly address the escalating human rights crisis in Tibet and condemn the residential boarding school system, which affects at least 1 million Tibetan children.

Since you assumed office, the human rights situation in Tibet has deteriorated alarmingly. Under the guise of "development" and "education," the Chinese government has implemented policies that are systematically eroding Tibetan identity, language, and culture. Among the most egregious of these is the vast network of colonial-style residential boarding schools, in which at least 1 million Tibetan children are forcibly separated from their families, placed into state-run facilities where they are forbidden from speaking their native language and subjected to political indoctrination.² This is nothing short of a cultural genocide targeting Tibet's youngest and most vulnerable.

Your silence on this matter is deafening, particularly given the intense concern raised by multiple Special Procedures mandates,³ Treaty Bodies,⁴ and UN States. As the UN's highest human rights official, your voice carries immense power and influence. Your mandate is not merely a privilege but

¹ <https://actions.tibetnetwork.org/un-protect-tibets-children> and https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/china_indoctrination_schools_loc/

² Tibet Action Institute, "Separated From Their Families, Hidden From the World: China's Vast System of Colonial Boarding Schools Inside Tibet," 2021, pg. 24, available at: https://s7712.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2021_ColonialBoardingSchoolReport_Digital.pdf

³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/02/china-un-experts-alarmed-separation-1-million-tibetan-children-families-and> UN Communication by Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues; the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; the Special Rapporteur on the right to education and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ref.: AL CHN 6/2022, 11 November 2022: <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=27444> and OHCH), "China: UN experts alarmed by separation of 1 million Tibetan children from families and forced assimilation at residential schools", 6 February 2023, available at:

⁴ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding Observations, 6 March 2023: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FC HN%2FCO%2F3&Lang=en; Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Concluding Observations, 30 May 2023: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FC HN%2FCO%2F9&Lang=en

a profound responsibility, and we, the Tibetan people—and the world—look to you for moral leadership.

We urge you to break your silence. The upcoming 58th session of the Human Rights Council offers a critical opportunity to address the residential boarding school issue in your oral update. Beyond this, we implore you to issue a long-form press release or other public statements condemning the residential boarding school system and to echo the voices of the UN Treaty Bodies in calling for an immediate end to these policies. We further urge you to unequivocally condemn the Chinese government’s restrictions on visits for human rights monitors and to press for meaningful and unfettered access to Tibet for your Office and all Special Procedure mandate holders.

Over 340,000 individuals believe, as we do, that your position demands the courage to confront injustices wherever they occur, including in Tibet. The ongoing crackdown cannot be met with indifference. The Tibetan people deserve your unwavering support, and the international community demands that you use your power and voice to speak out against the injustices unfolding in Tibet and against Tibet’s children who face an existential threat to their language, culture and unique identity.

Sincerely,

Gloria Montgomery

Advocacy Director
Tibet Justice Center

Mandie McKeown

Executive Director
International Tibet Network

Pema Doma

Executive Director
Students for a Free Tibet

Tenzin Zöchbauer

Executive Director
Tibet Initiative Deutschland

Lhadon Tethong

Director
Tibet Action Institute

Karma Gahler

President
Tibetan Youth Association Europe

On behalf of the following global Tibet-related organisations:

Aide aux Refugies Tibetains Alaskans for Tibet Amigos de Tibet, Colombia Amigos de Tibet, La Unión Chile Amigos del Tibet, El Salvador Amigos del Tibet, Santiago de Chile Anterrashtriya Bharat - Tibbet Sahyog Samiti Asociación Cultural Peruano Tibetana Asociación Cultural Tibetano Costarricense Association Cognizance Tibet, North Carolina Association Drôme Ardèche-Tibet Associazione Italia-Tibet Australia Tibet Council Balijara Foundation - Maharashtra Bay Area Friends of Tibet Bharat Tibbat Sahyog Manch Bharat Tibbat Samanvay Sangh Bharat Tibet Sangh - India Bharat Tibet Sangh - Jammu Bharrat Tibbat Samvad Manch, India	Phagma Drolma-Arya Tara RangZen: Movimento Tibete Livre, Brasil RBA Réseau Bouddhisme et Action, France Roof of the World Foundation, Indonesia Sakya Trinley Ling Santa Barbara Friends of Tibet Save Tibet, Austria Sierra Friends of Tibet Students for a Free Tibet - Austria Students for a Free Tibet - Belgium Students for a Free Tibet - Taiwan Students for a Free Tibet – Canada Students for a Free Tibet – France Students for a Free Tibet – India Students for a Free Tibet – Japan Students for a Free Tibet – UK Swedish Tibet Committee Swiss Tibetan Friendship Association (GSTF) Taiwan Friends of Tibet Tashi Delek Bordeaux
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<p> Boston Tibet Network Briancon05 Urgence Tibet CADAL Canada Tibet Committee Casa del Tibet – Spain Casa Tibet México Centro Cultural Columbo Tibetano Centro De Cultura Tibetana, Brazil Centro para la Apertura y el Desarrollo de América Latina Circle of Friends (Philippines) Comite de Apoyo al Tibet (CAT) Committee of 100 for Tibet Core Group for Tibetan Cause, India Czechs Support Tibet Dream for Children, Japan EcoTibet Ireland Foundation for Universal Responsibility of H. H. the Dalai Lama France-Tibet Free Indo-Pacific Alliance Free Tibet Free Tibet Fukuoka Friends of Tibet Costa Rica Friends of Tibet in Bulgaria Friends of Tibet in Finland Friends of Tibet New Zealand Ganasamannay Kolkata Grupo de Apoio ao Tibete, Portugal Himalayan Committee for Action on Tibet - Kinnaur Human Rights Network for Tibet & Taiwan International Campaign for Tibet India Tibet Friendship Society India Tibet Friendship Society India Tibet Friendship Society - Bihar India Tibet Friendship Society - Dashthrapuni India Tibet Friendship Society - Delhi India Tibet Friendship Society - Muzaffarpur International Tibet Independence Movement Israeli Friends of the Tibetan People Jal Kalyan Seva Samiti, Rajasthan Japan Association of Monks for Tibet (Super Sangha) Le Club Français, Paraguay Les Amis du Tibet Luxembourg Liberté au Tibet (Colmar, France) Lions Des Neiges Mont Blanc, France LUNGTA – Actief voor Tibet Maison des Himalayas Maison du Tibet – Tibet Info National Campaign for Free Tibet Support, India National Democratic Party of Tibet Objectif Tibet Passeport Tibetain </p>	<p> The Global Alliance for Tibet & Persecuted Minorities The Norwegian Tibet Committee The Youth Liberation Front of Tibet, Mongolia and Turkestan Tibet Action Group of Western Australia Tibet Action Institute Tibet cesky (Tibet in Czech) Tibet Committee of Fairbanks Tibet Friendship and Cooperation Society Tibet Group, Panama Tibet Initiative Deutschland Tibet Justice Center Tibet Lives, India Tibet Patria Libre, Uruguay Tibet Rescue Initiative in Africa Tibet Society of South Africa Tibet Solidarity Tibet Support Association Hungary Tibet Support Committee Denmark Tibet Support Group – Netherlands Tibet Support Group Adelaide - Australia Tibet Support Group Ireland Tibet Support Group Kenya Tibet Support Group Kiku, Japan Tibet Support Group, Costa Rica Tibetan Association of Germany Tibetan Association of Ithaca Tibetan Association of Northern California Tibetan Association of Philadelphia Tibetan Community Austria Tibetan Community in Australia (Queensland) Tibetan Community in Britain Tibetan Community in Denmark Tibetan Community in France Tibetan Community in Ireland Tibetan Community in Japan Tibetan Community of Australia (Victoria) Tibetan Community of Italy Tibetan Community Sweden Tibetan Cultural Association – Quebec Tibetan Programme of The Other Space Foundation Tibetan Women's Association Tibetan Youth Association in Europe Tibetans of Mixed Heritage Tibetisches Zentrum Hamburg TIBETmichigan TSG – Slovenia U.S. Tibet Committee V-TAG - United Kingdom Voces de Tibet, México </p>
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