

Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama 10 March 1989

Today we pay special tribute to the courage and determination of the Tibetan people, so many of whom have given their lives for our just and noble cause. The suffering our people have been subjected to during these decades marks the darkest period in our long history.

The struggle of the Tibetan people is a struggle for our inalienable right to determine our own destiny in freedom. It is a struggle for democracy, human rights and peace. Most of all, it is a struggle for survival as a people and nation with a unique civilization.

The Lhasa uprising of 1987 has greatly stirred the people throughout Tibet. Despite the peaceful nature of this and other demonstrations that have since taken place, many people have been confirmed killed, and many more arrested. I am deeply saddened to learn that there has been further bloodshed in Lhasa only days before making this statement. The loss of innocent lives saddened us very much. We not only honour these brave men, women and children today but also the over one million Tibetans who have died as a result of Chinese occupation.

No amount of repression, however brutal and violent, can silence the voice of freedom and justice. The frequent peaceful demonstrations which have taken place spontaneously throughout Tibet over the past years are clear indications of a much larger problem. Unfortunately the Chinese leadership still fails to understand the real situation in Tibet and the extent of dissatisfaction among the Tibetan people. In his last public statement before his untimely and sad demise, Panchen Rinpoche expressed the people's feelings when he said that the price Tibetans have had to pay under Chinese rule has been far higher than any benefits they may have gained.

Ours is a non-violent struggle, and it must remain so. The killing, imprisonment and torture of peaceful demonstrators or persons who express unsanctioned opinions is morally repressible and a violation of human rights as internationally recognized. It can never be justified no matter where in the world it occurs. The condemnation by the international community of these actions will, we hope, persuade the Chinese to abandon such methods. The United Nations General Assembly passed three resolutions condemning China's human rights abuses in Tibet. At this time, when the United Nations is increasingly effective in fulfilling its mission in various parts of the world, I call on the international community to urge the implementation of these three resolutions.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep sense of gratitude to the countless people who have voiced concern and expressed solidarity with our people at this critical time. We are also grateful for the conscientious reporting by visitors to Tibet of what they have seen and experienced there.

I am encouraged by the support we have received to our initiatives to find a peaceful and just solution to the tragic situation of Tibet. In September of 1987 I presented a Five Point Peace Plan for the restoration of peace and human rights in Tibet. Then, in June of

last year, I formulated further thoughts that could serve as a framework for substantive negotiations with the Chinese on the future of Tibet. The Chinese government has agreed to hold negotiations with us and left the venue and time for such negotiations for me to choose. Although I proposed that the negotiations should start in January in Geneva, the Chinese have for one reason or another delayed commencement of the talks. Nevertheless, as the Chinese have, unlike before, become more realistic these days, I remain hopeful that the Chinese leaders will see the wisdom of resolving the issue peacefully, by negotiations. I firmly believe a resolution based on the framework proposed by us will not only benefit both the Tibetan and the Chinese peoples, but will also contribute to regional and global peace and stability.

I am aware of the deep-felt disappointment of many Tibetans on the stand we have taken at Strasbourg. As I have stated before, the final decision will be left to the Tibetan people themselves to take.

I have always believed that human determination and truth will ultimately prevail over violence and oppression. Today important changes are taking place everywhere in the world which could profoundly affect our future and the future of all humanity and the planet we share. Courageous moves by world leaders have facilitated the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Hopes for peace, for the environment, and for a more humane approach to world problems seem greater than ever before. It is imperative that we Tibetans intensify our modest contribution to these changes through our endeavours both inside and in exile for the advancement of freedom, democracy and peace.

With my prayers for the well-being of all sentient beings.

The Dalai Lama
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