

10 March 2009

Hon. Kevin Rudd MP
Prime Minister of Australia



Dear Prime Minister

On behalf of the six million Tibetan people, including over six hundred exiled in Australia, we, the leaders of Australia's Tibetan community, are writing to you on the 50th anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan Uprising and the Dalai Lama's exile to India.

Following the violent crackdown on demonstrations last year, in April you raised the Tibet issue publicly in Beijing and in private with Chinese President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao. Your response was critical to the international diplomatic efforts that led in May to the resumption of contact between Chinese officials and representatives of the Dalai Lama.

Tragically the months since have seen the collapse of the Tibet-China dialogue and an unprecedented military build-up across the Tibetan Plateau. The Chinese Government has introduced strict new measures to punish dissidents, block the flow of information in and out of Tibet and restrict all expressions of Tibetan identity and culture.

Tibet is in a state of undeclared martial law with Tibetans experiencing a degree of repression reminiscent of the darkest days of the Cultural Revolution. The Chinese Government has rejected outright a proposal for resolving the Tibet issue through proper implementation of existing provisions for regional ethnic autonomy enshrined in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. Authorities have embarked on further provocation with the announcement that 28 March will be celebrated as "Serfs Emancipation Day".

Today we appeal humbly to the Australian Government to renew and strengthen its efforts to encourage a peaceful resolution of the crisis engulfing Tibet.

The many unilateral actions by concerned world leaders and national government have regrettably failed to convince the Chinese Government to enter into constructive negotiations over Tibet's future. We therefore appeal to the Australian Government to enter into substantive multilateral initiatives with other concerned nations including the US, Canada, Japan and EU member states to encourage meaningful negotiations on the points raised in the Tibetans' "Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People". G20 leaders such as yourself, meeting in London on 2 April to address the global economic crisis, have an important opportunity to collectively raise your concerns about Tibet with the Chinese leadership.

On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan Uprising we further request that the Australian Government publicly acknowledge the Tibetans' 50 years of peaceful resistance to policies undermining their religion and culture and publicly denounce the Chinese Government's proclamation of "Serf Emancipation Day".

Finally, we ask that you request the Chinese Government comply with the United Nations Committee Against Torture's request for a "thorough and independent inquiry" into excessive use of force following protests last year and support the Central Tibetan Administration's appeal for an end to the aggressive "Strike Hard" campaign in Tibet.

Yours sincerely

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President, Tibetan Community of Victoria



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