



Tibetan Community in Switzerland & Liechtenstein

Tibeter Gemeinschaft in der Schweiz & Liechtenstein

Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights
Mrs. Navanethem Pillay
Palais Wilson
52 rue des Pâquis
CH-1201 Geneva

Birmenstorf, 12th August 2011

**Defender of Human Rights – 4th Action of TCSL 2-year Campaign
Appeal to UN to send an independent fact-finding mission to Tibet now!
Appeal to UN: "Equality for Nationalities - Equality for Languages. " Demanding
rights of Tibetan children to adequate education in their own mother language.**

Your Excellency

Commencing May 30, 2011, Tibetans and their supporters have started a 2-year campaign to appeal to the UN to send an independent fact-finding mission to Tibet.

We kindly invite you to come and visit us at the site of our 4th action in front of the Palais Wilson on August 29, from 11:30 am to 4 pm.

The action will be staged with the motto "Equality for Nationalities - Equality for Languages. " Demanding rights of Tibetan children to adequate education in their own mother language.

Tibetan children will stage actions, reminding the public of the immediate threat of extinction of the Tibetan language and culture that will result from the implementation of recent Chinese plans for a new language policy at schools.

The biggest threat to Tibetan culture is the plans of government authorities to make Mandarin Chinese the primary language of instruction in the Tibetan schools in the province of Qinghai by 2015. All lessons and textbooks should be in Chinese language in primary schools by 2015 except Tibetan and English language classes. This will not only downgrade Tibetan to a "second language" with less time accorded to it in the curriculum, but poses a major threat to the children's cultural identity.

Already the current reality of education, and even more these plans, represent a blatant violation of Article 37 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy states which demands "that institutions of education where most of the students come from minority nationalities shall, whenever possible, use textbooks in their own languages and use their languages as the media of instruction." In reality, the Chinese leaders have always held the view



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that for the ultimate control of Tibet, the Tibetan language and culture must be destroyed and replaced with Chinese. Therefore, in all Tibetan areas and in the varying levels of schools, Tibetan language is gradually being replaced by Chinese. Tibetan language is given either only 50% or sometimes no weight at all in Tibet Autonomous Region university and college

examinations. Prof. David Germano of Tibetan and Buddhist Studies at the University of Virginia remarks that this language policy is “one that simply consigns Tibetans to oblivion and to perpetual second class status.”

Lack of access to adequate education and cultural discrimination has led many parents to sending their children to schools abroad, risking their lives on the escape routes crossing the Himalayan passes. During their action in Geneva, Tibetans will stage the documentary movie “Escape across the Himalaya” by Maria Blumencron which provides a vivid account of the hardships encountered during the escape.

Your Excellency, we are inviting you to visit, meet and view with your own eyes.

Yours sincerely,

S. Memmishofer

President of the Tibetan Community in Switzerland & Liechtenstein

Copy: Mr. Ban Ki Moon, General Secretary of the United Nations