

# WEEKLY DIGEST



BUREAU OF HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA, NEW DELHI

27 July 2015

## Facts About Tenzin Delek Rinpoche

Tenzin Delek Rinpoche was recognized by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as a reincarnated lama in the 1980s. He was a community leader and a staunch advocate for the protection and preservation of Tibetan culture, religion, environment and way of life for decades.

In April 2002, he was arrested on false charges of exploding bombs and distributing separatist leaflets. His trial was held in secret without independent legal counsel and the evidence against him was non-existent. He received a death sentence. The sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment.

Tenzin Delek Rinpoche is widely respected in his home county of Lithang in eastern Tibet. In 2009, over 40,000 Tibetans in Tibet signed petitions demanding Tenzin Delek's release.

Despite repeated International pressures and appeals for a medical parole due to his ailing condition, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche died in Chinese prison serving 13 years of life imprisonment on July 12, 2015.

"Since I am a Tibetan, I have always been sincere and devoted to the interests and well-being of Tibetan people. That is the real reason why the Chinese do not like me and framed me. That is why they are going to take my precious life even though I am innocent." -*Transcript of recording of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche obtained from the detention center in Dartsedo, the capital of Kardze Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province, on January 20, 2003.*



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Tulku Tenzin Delek Dies n China Prison

Grievous Photos Emerge of Tibetans injured in Chinese Firing

China: Release Tibetan Monk's Body

China cremates revered Tibetan monk against family wishes: Right group

Deceased Tibetans monk's sister and niece detained

Chinese Police are said to seize Ashes of Tibetan Monk Tenzin Delek Rinpoche

Tibetan Parliament Condoloes Death of Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche

Dharamshala Holds Prayer Service for Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche

Banner waving Tibetan youths vent ire against China over monk's death

Exiled Govt urges China to release Tenzin Delek's sister, ashes

Australian police arrest Tibetan protesters at Chinese consulate

**Press Release & Statements**

**Previous Resolutions on TDR**

# NEWS

## DEMISE OF TDR

### **Tulku Tenzin Delek Dies in China Prison**

Reliable sources say that highly respected Tibetan spiritual teacher and political prisoner, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche has died in a Chinese prison in Chengdu on Sunday, July 12.

More in: [VOA](#)

#### **Related News:**

[NY Times](#)   [Reuters](#)   [Washington Post](#)  
[The Globe and Mail](#)   [Phayul](#)   [HRW](#)

## CHINESE POLICE FIRING

### **Grievous Photos Emerge of Tibetans Injured in Chinese Firing**

Photos of Tibetans grievously injured in the indiscriminate firing by Chinese police on demonstrators expressing their grief at the death of a prominent Tibetan political prisoner are slowly trickling into exile.

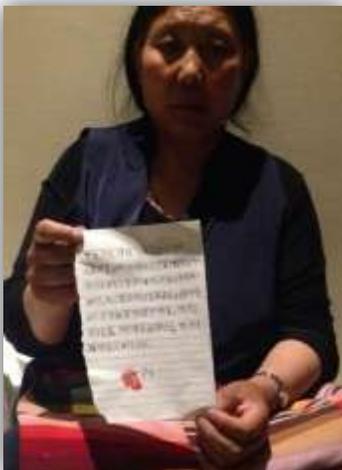
More in: [Tibet.net](#)

#### **Related News:**

[ICT](#)   [The Tibet Post](#)

## CREMATION

### **China: Release Tibetan Monk's Body**



Chinese authorities' failure to return the body of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche to his family and the monastic community is inhumane and violates China's own new rule on the handling of deaths in prison, Human Rights Watch said today.

More in: [HRW](#)

### **China cremates revered Tibetan monk against family wishes: Rights group**

Chinese authorities have cremated the body of a revered Tibetan monk against his family's wishes, rights groups said today, after protests erupted following news of his death.

More in: [Economic Times](#)

#### **Related News:**

[ICT](#)   [DNA](#)   [LA Times](#)

## DETENTION

### **Deceased Tibetan monk's sister and niece detained**

Mainland police have detained two family members of a deceased Tibetan monk, a rights group and media said, one day after his body was cremated in prison against his family's wishes.

More in: [SCMP](#)

#### **Related News:**

[Tibet.net](#)   [NY Times](#)   [ICT](#)

## SEIZURE OF ASHES

### **Chinese Police Are Said to Seize Ashes of Tibetan Monk Tenzin Delek Rinpoche**

By DAN LEVIN JULY 21, 2015

BEIJING — The Chinese police forcibly seized the ashes of a prominent Tibetan monk whose death in prison this month set off public demonstrations and raised suspicions about his treatment while incarcerated, supporters of the monk said on Tuesday.

More in: [NYT](#)

#### **Related News:**

[RFA](#)   [TIME](#)

## PROTESTS & URGES

### **Tibetan Parliament Condoles Death of Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche**

July 15, 2015

Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile expressed its condolences and solidarity with Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche and

urged the Chinese government to return his body to his family members and disciples, to allow them to arrange for his last rites according to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

Source: [Tibet.net](http://Tibet.net)

## Dharamshala Holds Prayer Service for Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche

Hundreds of Tibetans and Tibet supporters gathered at Tsuglakhang, the main Tibetan temple in McLeod Ganj today to express condolences and solidarity with the sudden death in prison of Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, one of the most prominent Tibetan political prisoners and a highly respected spiritual figure.

More in: [Tibet.net](http://Tibet.net)



## Banner waving Tibetan youths vent ire against China over monk's death

ANI, New Delhi, July 20, 2015

Two Tibetan youth staged a protest in front of the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi on Monday over the release of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's body.

More in: [Business Standard](http://Business Standard)

## Exiled govt urges China to release Tenzin Delek's sister, ashes

Hindustan Times, Dharamshala, July 22, 2015

Sikyong (Tibetan Prime Minister-in-exile) Lobsang Sangay has urged the Chinese authorities to hand over spiritual leader Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's ashes to his family and disciples and also called for the release of Delek's sister and her daughter who reportedly went missing after being detained by the Chinese police.

More in: [Hindustan Times](http://Hindustan Times)

## Australian police arrest Tibetan protesters at Chinese consulate

July 22, 2015

SYDNEY (Reuters) - Australian police arrested eight Tibetan protesters who stormed the Chinese consulate in Sydney on Wednesday, including one person who scaled a flagpole to pull down the Chinese flag.

More in: [The Star](http://The Star)



# PRESS RELEASE

## Congressman McGovern Statement on Death of Tibetan Activist Tenzin Delek Rinpoche

July 20, 2015

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Jim McGovern (MA-02), a senior House Democrat and Co-Chairman of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, released the following statement on the death of Tibetan activist Tenzin Delek Rinpoche:

Last week I was deeply saddened to learn of the tragic death of the well-known Tibetan monk, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche. Tenzin Delek was serving a life sentence under very harsh conditions for allegedly 'causing explosions' and 'inciting separatism,' charges against which he steadfastly maintained his innocence. Just last April, I had written to the U.S. State Department to encourage our government officials to prioritize Tenzin Delek's release on medical parole, because he was reported to be suffering from serious health problems. In late June, the State Department assured me the message had been transmitted, but now we see that China turned a callous blind eye to my pleas and those of many others. The Chinese authorities bear direct responsibility for Tenzin Delek's unnecessary death.

But the barbarity of the story does not end there. Tenzin Delek's family asked the Chinese government to return his body to them, so that they could carry out funeral rites in accordance with Tibetan tradition. This very basic, very human request was supported by Tibetan religious leaders and many others around the world. Instead, Chinese authorities cremated the body at a secret prison outside Chengdu, returning only ashes to his distraught family and community. The authorities' only humane gesture, which was minimal

and under pressure, was to permit several monks and family members, including two sisters, to view the body before the cremation. The monks were able to wash and dress the body, and carry out prayers, as was the family. But let me be clear: the authorities' actions after Tenzin Delek's death display the same utter contempt for their own laws, and for religious traditions, that characterized their treatment of this spiritual leader during his life.

We do not know the cause of Tenzin Delek's death. He died while family members were waiting to see him, in what would have been only his second family visit in 13 years. His sisters, after seeing the body, report that his lips and fingernails had turned black; they believe he was murdered. At a minimum, it was the height of cruelty to have allowed a prisoner who was tortured, suffering from medical problems, and had been denied medical treatment, to die in prison.

I do not believe that we can expect the Chinese government to tell the world the truth about Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's death. For this reason, today I am calling for an immediate independent international investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death, with the participation of forensic and human rights experts from the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. I also call on the Chinese government to allow a visit and investigation by the UN's Special Rapporteur on torture, Juan Mendez, in light of the allegations of torture against Tenzin Delek, and China's upcoming review this fall under the Convention Against Torture.

Frankly, these independent investigations would be in China's best interests. Given their treatment of the man before his death, and of his body afterwards, authorities' statements have little credibility.

Tenzin Delek's death is being felt very strongly in Tibetan communities – we've already seen reports of police firing into the air to disperse the crowds that gathered to demand the return of the body to his home in Sichuan. I am concerned for the safety of the members of Tenzin Delek's family and I have received very disturbing reports that his sister, Dolkar Lhamo, and her daughter, Nyima Lhamo, have been detained by the police. Please be assured that my voice will be heard if they are harmed or their rights are violated in any way.

My heart goes out to the family of Tenzin Delek, to his religious followers, and to the communities he served. He was an outstanding human being who defended his culture and his people, and paid dearly for it. He will not be forgotten."

**Source:** [Congressman Jim McGovern](#)



Press Statement

## Death of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche

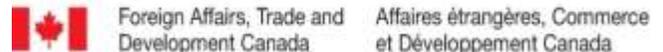
John Kirby  
Department Spokesperson  
Washington, DC  
July 13, 2015

We are saddened to learn that Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, a Tibetan lama who has been a political prisoner since 2002, has died in prison. We express our deepest condolences to his family, friends, and supporters.

The United States had consistently urged China to release Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, most recently out of concern for his health. We hope Chinese authorities will investigate and make public the circumstances surrounding his death.

We urge Chinese authorities to return his body to his family or to his monastery so that customary religious rituals can be properly performed.

**Source:** [U.S. Department of State](#)



## Ambassador Bennett Deeply Saddened by Death of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche

July 13, 2015 - Ottawa, Ontario - Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada

Andrew Bennett, Canada's Ambassador for Religious Freedom, today issued the following statement:

"I was deeply saddened to hear of the death of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, the Tibetan monk who died Sunday in Chuandong prison in Chengdu. I extend my heartfelt condolences to his family and community.

"Tenzin Delek Rinpoche was widely regarded for his spiritual leadership and his tireless work in providing religious, health and social services to Tibetan nomads.

"This is a time for mourning so that all may mark his death with dignity and respect. I respectfully request that Chinese officials return the body of this revered

person to his family, and that Buddhist traditions be respected.”

#### **Contacts**

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Twitter: @FreedomReligion and @CanadaFP  
Facebook: Canada's Office of Religious Freedom

**Source:** [Government of Canada](#)



#### **STATEMENT**

Brussels, 15/07/2015  
150715\_03\_en

### **Statement by the Spokesperson on recent developments in the human rights situation in China**

The recent systematic arrest of a number of human rights lawyers and human rights defenders by Chinese public security forces raises serious questions about China's commitment to strengthening the rule of law.

The Chinese authorities should abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, respect the rights of all citizens as recognised by the Chinese Constitution and release all those detained for seeking to protect these rights.

Following the death in prison of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, a Tibetan lama who has been a prisoner since 2002, we express our deepest condolences to his family, friends and supporters. The EU had consistently called for his release or adequate medical treatment. We expect the Chinese authorities to investigate and make public the circumstances surrounding his death.

#### **FOR FURTHER DETAILS:**

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**Source:** [European Union External Action](#)



**Federal Foreign Office**

Press Release

### **Human Rights Commissioner on the death of the civil rights activist Tenzin Delek Rinpoche**

15.07.2015

Christoph Strässer, the Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid, issued the following statement today (15 July) on the death of the civil rights activist Tenzin Delek Rinpoche:

"I was deeply saddened to hear of the death of the Tibetan monk and civil rights activist Tenzin Delek Rinpoche. He enjoyed considerable support around the globe. Since his imprisonment and conviction in 2002, numerous politicians as well as many private individuals in different parts of the world have appealed for his release.

Over the years, the German Government and the EU called repeatedly for him to be given medical treatment and released from prison on humanitarian grounds. The concern about Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's health and the appeal that he receive adequate medical care were expressed on many occasions during high-level talks with the Chinese Government. Furthermore, information was requested on his prison conditions. Unfortunately, these efforts were in vain.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's family and friends, as well as to his numerous supporters.

I urge China to ensure that all prisoners receive medical care, which should not be used as a means of putting pressure on prisoners or their families. Following the death of the activist Cao Shunli in prison in March 2014, the death of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche is another indication that the Chinese authorities are prepared to risk the deaths of imprisoned activists by denying adequate medical care. We are deeply concerned about this development, which violates key humanitarian principles."

**Source:** [Federal Foreign Office](#)



Public Statement  
ASA 17/2102/2015  
Date: 15 July 2015

## China: Return the body of prominent Tibetan monk Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche who died in prison

The Chinese government must immediately return to his family the body of Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche, a prominent Tibetan Buddhist monk who died while serving a life sentence in Chuandong Prison in Sichuan province, in Southwest China or inform them of the whereabouts of his remains.

Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche, a Tibetan religious and community leader, was sentenced to death with a two year reprieve in 2002 for "inciting separatism", which was then commuted to life imprisonment in 2005. He had been convicted in connection with several bombings in Sichuan province and had been detained for more than 13 years prior to his death on 12 July 2015, as reported by the Chinese authorities. Amnesty International had previously raised concerns that the trial of Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche fell far short of international fair trial standards, and that he was punished solely because of his peaceful religious and civic work with Tibetan communities.

The international community had consistently raised with Chinese authorities their concerns about Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche's treatment while in detention including torture and other ill-treatment and most recently concerns for his health. The Tibetan community and the family of Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche made multiple requests for medical parole but received no reply from the Chinese government. During his 13 years in detention, the family was allowed to visit Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche only once, in 2013, and had no access to him before his death, according to the International Campaign for Tibet.

Following the news of his death, Tibetan organizations have reported large gatherings, in some cases more than a thousand people, to mourn Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche and call for the return of his body so that the family and the community could perform customary Buddhist religious rites.

Of great concern are reports from the Tibetan Centre of Human Rights and Democracy that on 13 July the police have countered the protests with excessive and arbitrary use of force, including the tear gas and gun shots.

The Chinese government must respect the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and religion, and allow members of his family and community to gather to express their grief about the death of their religious and community leader. Police must facilitate assemblies and may not break up gatherings with unnecessary or excessive force.

Under international legal standards, the Chinese government must promptly return the body to the family or give them information about the whereabouts of the remains.

Source: [Amnesty International](#)



Tibet Society  
July 13, 2015

## China condemned as Tibetan community leader dies in prison

Chair of UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet says "China has his blood on its hands"

Tibet Society is greatly saddened and outraged by the news of the death of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche who died in a Chinese prison on 12 July [1]. Tibet Society condemns the Chinese government for not releasing Tenzin Delek Rinpoche on medical parole after an application was submitted by his family in 2014 and subsequent requests were made by numerous governments, including the UK during the April UK-China Human Rights Dialogue [2].

"The death of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche exposes the true nature of the Chinese government's attitude towards Tibet," said Fabian Hamilton MP, chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet. Mr Hamilton, who raised Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's case during a parliamentary debate on 18 June 2015 [3], added, "China has disregarded the concerns of the international community over Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, flouted universally-accepted norms on legal processes during his case and refused medical parole despite his serious illness. Now China has his blood on its hands."

Philippa Carrick, CEO of Tibet Society said, "Tenzin Delek Rinpoche was an influential community leader whom the Communist Party could not control. Rather than work with him to bring progress and raise standards within local society, the authorities framed him for a crime he did not commit and then left him to

die in prison. To China, enforcing its oppressive ideology and silencing the Tibetan population is of greater concern than human rights or individual lives."

A much respected and popular Tibetan community leader, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche had been serving a life prison sentence. Arrested in 2002 on false charges, he was initially sentenced to death after a trial that Human Rights Watch described as, "procedurally flawed". In 2002, his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. He was known to be in seriously ill health for a number of years, with a heart condition and high blood pressure. Despite numerous international requests for medical parole over the last 18 months, the Chinese government failed to respond, with tragic consequences.

Tenzin Delek Rinpoche died on 12 July 2015 in Chuandong prison in Sichuan province. His family were informed of the 65 year-old's worsening condition but arrived after he had died. According to Radio Free Asia, the authorities have not released Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's body to his family.

Tibet Society calls on the Chinese government to officially confirm the death in prison of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche and release his body to his family to allow traditional funeral rites. Tibet Society also demands that the Chinese government conducts an official enquiry into Tenzin Delek's death and make the findings public.

Tibet Society has passed on the information to the UK Foreign Office and requested a statement from the UK government condemning the death.

**Source: Tibet Society**

# PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS ON TDR

[European Parliament resolution on the human rights situation of Tibetans](#)

December 19, 2002

[European Parliament resolution on Tibet, the case of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche](#)

November 18, 2004

[US Senate passed a resolution calling for the Release of Tibetan Political Prisoners, Including Tenzin Delek](#)

December 7, 2004

[European Parliament resolution on the case of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche](#)

October 27, 2005

[U.S. Senate Passes Resolution Calling for Release of Chinese Political Prisoners, Including Tenzin Delek](#)

January 26, 2006

The Weekly Tibet News Digest is a collection of different articles, columns and Tibet related news published in websites. The views expressed are of the authors and do not necessarily reflect endorsement by Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, New Delhi.

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