

Tibetan Declaration of Independence
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Independence Hall, Philadelphia, PA
Conclusion of “March for Tibet’s Independence”
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When we fight for Tibetan freedom we are, in a real sense, fighting for the freedom of oppressed people and nations all over the world. The real battles for freedom are fought in local and mostly desperate struggles, by people prepared to give up not just respectability and careers but even their lives. Freedom Struggles are by their very nature disruptive. There is an unsettling quality to even the mildest of them that finds echo in the old legal exhortation: *Fiat iusticia, et pereat mundi* — Let justice be done though the world perish. Yet, however disruptive, however much a source of economic loss and human suffering, the indomitable struggles of Aung San Suu Kyi and Nelson Mandela inspire freedom-loving people all over the world.

Each victory of freedom over tyranny is a tremendous boost to other causes. Tibetans remember how genuinely thrilled they were when Bangladesh became independent, and even more encouraged and proud when they learned that Tibetan paratroopers had made an important contribution to the victory. After India gained her independence, a whole succession of African and Asian nations also became free from their European colonial masters. In the 1990s, with the fall of the Berlin wall, another series of countries gained their freedom, this time from the Soviet yoke. Tibetan independence could well precipitate, or at least herald, a new era of freedom not only for neighboring countries such as Burma, East Turkistan, and Inner Mongolia but even for the people of China itself.

It is vital that we do not give up the struggle for Rangzen. We must instead completely rethink and revitalize the struggle. The Tibetan Freedom Struggle must constantly seek effective ways to challenge Chinese tyranny both inside Tibet itself and all over the world, even if that entails facing Chinese reprisals or retaliations. The struggle for Rangzen is a revolutionary cause. It must be a cause for those with courage, dedication, and a willingness to make sacrifices.

It is only with moral commitment that we will be able to bring about a restoration of Tibetan independence and establishment of a genuinely democratic system of government based on the rule of law and the primacy of individual freedom. Of course, there is no guarantee that independence will happen soon, or even in our lifetimes — though many Tibetans are somehow convinced it will. Yet, it goes without saying that maintaining the goal of Rangzen is vital to its eventual achievement.

The hope of independence is vital for people inside Tibet. Keeping alive the Freedom Struggle in exile gives people inside Tibet hope, and in spite of the terrible sufferings they undergo, gives them some assurance that their world has not disappeared entirely. In order for Tibetans to preserve their identity, culture, and religion, the hope of a free Tibet must always be preserved.

We individuals and our organizations assembled here today are firmly behind all the Tibetans who are standing up and demanding independence, and we mutually pledge to fully support those inside who risk everything, including their lives, in the quest for a free and democratic homeland.

We call upon individual nations of the world and the United Nations Organization to support the inalienable right of Tibetans to an independent homeland. We appeal to the United States of America, the first liberal democratic nation in the world, to give due recognition to the rightful cause of the Tibetan people and aid them in their noble quest for independence, freedom, and democracy.