

Tibetan People's Movement

July 23, 2007

For Immediate Release:

Progress in Tibetan People's Movement

The main purpose of this press conference is to brief the media on the progress of the Tibetan People's Movement which is organizing a major Tibetan campaign against the Beijing 2008 Olympics in New Delhi on the 4th August. Tibetan People's Movement was created in the heated public activism last year in November and since then the various NGOs that created it has not only given leadership, coordination and resources but has been responsible for some of the most successful campaign in the recent times.



The 4th August Tibetan campaign in New Delhi is being organized by the Tibetan people's Movement and presently there are four Tibetan NGOs who are working together for it: Tibetan Women's Association (TWA), GuChuSum: Ex-Political Prisoners Movement, National Democratic Party of Tibet (NDPT) and Students for a Free Tibet (SFT).

As declared during the press conference on June 30th, the Tibetan People's Movement's Team Tibet Campaign will be held on August 4, 2007 in New Delhi. The campaign will be organize an "International Marathon Run" participated by international runners and a friendly India-Tibet exhibition football match between the Tibetan National Team and Delhi State Team, Delhi-XI.

Representatives of the 4 NGOs have been receiving overwhelming moral and financial support from the Tibetan community both in India and abroad. Our campaigners have been touring various Tibetan refugee camps, schools, monasteries all over India. We continue to appeal for such support and participation.

Clarification

Since there is going to be two Tibetan campaigns in Delhi during the first week of August for the same purpose of campaigning against Beijing Olympics, we are getting to know that in some quarters of the Tibetan community, some misunderstanding and confusion is prevailing, especially after the withdrawal of Tibetan Youth Congress from the organizing committee. For that we would like to clarify presenting the history, the objectives and importance of the campaign.

he August 4th event is aimed directly against the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The Chinese government will use the global platform that Olympics provide to legitimize their claim over Tibet and gain international credibility as a peaceful and unified country. Through this campaign, the 4 NGOs will publicize China's atrocious communist rule in Tibet and highlight the appalling human rights situation in Tibet. Like other nations, the Tibetan people also want to be represented at the Olympics under Tibet's national flag.

Team Tibet

The concept of Team Tibet was initially discussed during International Tibet Support Network meeting from May 1-4, 2006 at the Club House, Dharamsala. Delegates of all the major Tibetan NGOs and Tibet Support Groups (TSG) attending the meeting passed a resolution to form a Team Tibet and to campaign for Team Tibet to be represented at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Likewise, on May 3rd, Olympics' Campaign Working Group convened for a brainstorming session in Dharamsala before attending the 5th TSG meet in Brussels, Belgium, that was participated by all major NGOs. It was decided at the meeting to launch a preliminary campaign titled, "Tug of War". The campaign was organized by 5 NGOs in Dharamsala on May 13th, 2007 to highlight Team Tibet and they are TWA, NDPT, SFT, RTYC and Gu Chu Sum movement for Tibet.

At the 5th TSG conference in Brussels from May 11-14, 2007, organized by Tibetan Government in Exile, Olympic campaign was prioritized amongst other campaigns for Tibet. The concept of Team Tibet was unanimously endorsed as the most practical and effective campaign by 315 delegates representing all Tibetan NGOs and TSGs from 56 nations. This conference was followed by an ITSN conference on May 15th. At that meeting, 4 main elements of the Olympic campaign was identified; Team Tibet, One Year Countdown (August 4 and August 8), Torch Relay, and Public Engagement and related campaigns.

Thus, 5 NGOs in Dharamsala met on June 8th, 2007 to strategize the Olympic campaign and agreed for a Tibetan People's Movement to be held on August 4th, 2007 in Delhi consisting of International Run for Tibet and a friendly football match between Tibetan National Team and Indian Team.

TYC's withdrawal from the Organizing Committee

A press conference was held on June 30th by the 5 organizing NGOs to announce the August 4th campaign. However, on July 5th, Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) sent a letter to the organizing committee notifying its withdrawal from the Committee and their plan to carry out an indefinite hunger strike campaign at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi that began on July 8th. The remaining Organizing Committee convened again to re-strategize the planned campaign on August 4. We are aware about the hunger strikers' dire physical condition by 4th August, and accordingly we made appropriate changes in our original action plan of the day.

The Organizing Committee consisting of the major Tibetan NGOs have successfully organized campaigns when we are together and united as in the past track record like the joint campaigns on Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's release, Banning Animal Skin Products, the protest against Golmud to Lhasa railway, Nangpala Shooting protest, the Hu Jintao visit protest and March 10 protest this year.

The Organizing Committee believes Tibetan Youth Congress to be one of the most important NGOs in the Tibetan community in exile and we recognize the significance of the ongoing indefinite hunger strike and the August 8th Mass Campaign. The Organizing Committee is fully supportive of the 14 hunger strikers and respects their courage and sacrifice for the cause of our country's freedom. We appeal to the general public to dissociate from rumors intended at creating a rift and destroy the unity within our community.

The Olympics Campaign is a yearlong campaign aimed at promoting the Tibetan freedom movement. The 4 NGOs appeal to the Tibetan people for their continuous support and participation in all the upcoming Olympic campaigns.

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