



Tibetan Community in Switzerland & Liechtenstein

Tibeter Gemeinschaft in der Schweiz & Liechtenstein

Geneva, 2 June 2009

Minutes of the meeting with OHCHR officials

Memorandum to the attention of the
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
H. E. Mrs. Navanethem Pillay
OHCHR, Palais Wilson

15.30h – 16.15h

Attendees:

Zafeer Ud Din, Human Rights Officer, Civil Society Unit OHCHR
Melissa Fernandez, Human Rights Officer, Asia Pacific Unit OHCHR

Karma L. Pangring, President Tibetan Community in Switzerland and Liechtenstein TCSL
Kalsang N. Kangrang, Vice-President TCSL
Jigme N. Drongshar, Secretary General TCSL
Phuntsok Gangshontsang, Spokesman TCSL

Violations of human rights in Tibet – A matter of urgency

Introduction

Zafeer and Melissa introduced themselves as representatives of the Civil Society Unit and the Asia Pacific Unit at OHCHR. Zafeer Ud Din has recently joined the Geneva office whereas Melissa formerly worked for the ESCR Special Procedures Division and today works with Christine Chung and Maureen Teo.

Phuntsok Gangshontsang introduces the TCSL delegation and addresses words of thanks and gratitude for the warm welcome. Furthermore he expresses the Tibetan Community's general concern of recent developments in Tibet. All agree that the Memorandum is read by PG before handing over to Zafeer Ud Din.

Zafeer and Melissa acknowledge the receipt of the Memorandum by stating that the content will be seriously treated and discussed with their senior colleagues within the respective units. Both officers confirm their commitment to follow up on the issue.

PG is suggesting extracting the latest reports on Tibet disseminated by government and international press sources to give a brief overview of latest developments and decisions on Tibet. Zafeer and Melissa both appreciate the helpful update. JD presents the headlines in a chronological order. All attendees agree on a discussion in a question and answer (Q&A) format. JD specifies that the full reports are available on web and refers to the diverse hyperlinks. Zafeer appreciates the info and wishes to receive the links via e-mail. PG acts as key contact with OHCHR. As such, he forwards the respective reports to OHCHR.

Karma Pangring opens the Q&A by highlighting the recent OHCHR visits by Tibetan delegations and refers to the memorandum handed over on June 2, 2008. KP points out that the TCSL has not yet received any feedback on the urgent demands. KP reports from an increasing tension and impatience that has led to contained frustration within the Tibetan community recently. KP says it is extremely important to get information and feedback from OHCHR following our meetings. KP describes the situation in Tibet as tragic and reports from monks that were beaten and tortured by Chinese army on their way to the lavatories outside their rooms and walls. This happened because the army has declared a curfew. Such fundamental human rights are not respected in Tibet today. KP raises another issue by asking whether former High Commissioner for Human Rights, H.E. Louise Arbour, has carried out her planned visit to Tibet last year. As a reminder, the High Commissioner intended to visit Lhasa in 2008 but the Chinese government has rejected her entrance by stating "the timing of the visit is inappropriate". KP wants to know if H.E. Navanethem Pillay is planning to make a visit to Tibet. Both officers are unaware of such intention but will raise the topic at their next internal gathering. Kalsang Kangrang is raising his concern over the current state and urges the officers to elevate the pressure on China. The TCSL delegation concludes its 45 minutes' meeting by emphasizing on the urgency for feedback and advice and stresses out the inevitable need for support by the OHCHR.

The meeting was held in a frank and constructive manner. Both parties confirmed their commitment and will to collaborate. Zafeer and Melissa were good listeners and credible. TCSL is eager to get promising feedback and helpful advice from OHCHR.

Tibetan Community in Switzerland and Liechtenstein

English minutes written by
Phuntsok Gangshontsang
Uster, June 3, 2009