

## **DEMONSTRATIONS IN TIBET**

*'Tibet is a human rights issue as well as a civil and political rights issue. But there's something else too - Tibet has a precious culture based on principles of wisdom and compassion. This culture addresses what we lack in the world today; a very real sense of inter-connectedness. We need to protect it for the Tibetan people, but also for ourselves and our children.'*

*- Richard Gere, Chairman of the Board of the International Campaign for Tibet*

**Current Situation:** The recent demonstrations in Tibet follow a string of marches around the world on March 10 to commemorate the 49th anniversary of an uprising against Chinese rule in the mountainous region that has become a focus for protesters ahead of the Beijing Olympics. China plans to have the Olympic torch carried into Tibet over Mount Everest.

**Historical background:** Tibet was effectively independent for decades before Chinese communist troops entered in 1950. Nine years later the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, fled into exile after a failed revolt against Chinese rule. Tibet has since become a point of contention between Chinese communist leaders and those who advocate independence or greater autonomy for the region.

**International response:** "The Chinese authorities also need to address the underlying grievances of the Tibetan people and the long-term policies that have generated such resentment," said Catherine Baber, Director of the Asia-Pacific Programme at Amnesty International. Long-term grievances surfacing include perceived exclusion from the benefits of economic development, restrictions on religious practice and the weakening of Tibetan culture and ethnic identity through government policies.

**From the Vatican:** Pope Benedict XVI denounced injustice and violence as "scourges of humanity" in his Easter Sunday message to the world and he singled out the Middle East and Tibet among places most in need of peace.

**What can you do?** Sign a petition at this site.

[http://www.avaaz.org/en/tibet\\_end\\_the\\_violence/6.php?cl=62416812](http://www.avaaz.org/en/tibet_end_the_violence/6.php?cl=62416812)

### ***Lead me to Peace*** (Satish Kumar)

Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth.

Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.

Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace.

Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe, Peace, Peace, Peace.

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Sarah Menassa

Promoter of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

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