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**STUDENTS FOR A
FREE TIBET**

2018
in review



Transforming our world through nonviolent action

Activating the next generation of youth leaders

ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

TIBETAN HERO RELEASED

Tibetan activist and writer Shokjang was arrested in Rebkong, Tibet, for expressing his disapproval of the excessive deployment of Chinese military in Tibet, and arbitrarily detained at Menyuan Prison for almost a year before being sentenced to three years on February 17, 2016. Responding to authorities, Shokjang rejected their sentence and maintained his innocence throughout.

Since his detention, SFT has led a campaign for his immediate and safe release. On March 19 of this year, after years of continued advocacy by SFT and groups worldwide, Shokjang was safely released. We celebrate his release and pledge to continue amplifying the voices of Tibetans inside Tibet and advocating for political prisoners like Shokjang.



Shokjang greeted by another renowned writer, Theurang, upon his release.

A UNITED FRONT AGAINST XI JINPING

In September, at the opening of the 73rd General Assembly of the United Nations, Tibetans, Uyghurs, Southern Mongolians, Taiwanese, Hong Kongers, Chinese democracy activists, and supporters gathered as a united force against Chinese President Xi Jinping's totalitarian rule and against the growing repression in China and its occupied territories. The protest highlighted the people's resistance against China's brutal occupation and their calls for freedom and democracy. SFT played a major role in coordinating the protest by



building a coalition of 13 leading organizations, including World Uyghur Congress, Keep Taiwan Free, New Yorkers Supporting Hong Kong, Regional Tibetan Youth Congress of NY/NJ, Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, Uyghur Human Rights Project, US-Tibet Committee, China Human Rights Accountability Center, Initiatives for China, Uyghur American Association, Chu Shi Gang Druk, and Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO).

2ND TIBET, HONG KONG, TAIWAN ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCE



Participants and organizers of the conference with US Congressman Jim McGovern.

In June, SFT organized the 2nd "Tibet, Hong Kong, Taiwan Round Table Conference for Freedom, Democracy, and the Right to Self-Determination" in Washington, DC at George Washington University to discuss common issues, build understanding, and develop a strategic long-term vision. The event brought together 35 young front-line movement leaders, organizers, and strategists, representing 12 leading organizations and networks from all three movements. The participants joined SFT from Canada, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and across the United States. The conference also invited United States Congressman Jim McGovern, National Endowment for Democracy President Carl Gershman, leading Chinese human rights lawyer Teng Biao, Human Rights Watch China Director Sophie Richardson, and International Center for Non-violent Conflict Executive Director Hardy Merriman to discuss a global strategy for defending freedom and democracy against the growing international threat posed by China and its totalitarian regime. Also discussed at the conference was building new ways to support the movement at the global level.

TIBET ADVOCACY AT THE UNITED NATIONS

As part of the Tibet Advocacy Coalition, SFT has engaged in United Nations (UN) advocacy work for the past five years. The Coalition urges diplomats from around the world to raise Tibet to build pressure on Beijing to address its failed policies and back down from its vicious campaign of violence against Tibetans. Throughout the year, SFT visited Geneva for the UN Human Rights Council, organized trainings for youth on UN engagement, and took part in various events, including the “Indigenous Participation” side event held at the UN Headquarters in New York by the Canadian Mission.



UN Tibet Advocacy Coalition training for youth participants from across Europe.

The efforts of the Coalition were key in the lead up to China’s third Universal Periodic Review at the UN, where 13 member states stood up for Tibet, including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Nine of these states (Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, France, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States) made recommendations on Tibet.

MOMO CRAWL

In 2018, SFT hosted more than 2,000 people at Momo Crawls in Toronto, Canada and New York, USA. Both of



Momo enthusiasts at the Momo Crawl in New York City.

these cities are well known by food enthusiasts, being melting pots of cultures, allowing for a unique platform to introduce Tibet’s rich heritage and engage people on Tibet’s culinary offerings, history, and current status as one the least free countries in the world.

A NEW WORLD RECORD



SFT India and Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, the exile seat of the Panchen Lama, collaborated to set a world record for “The Most Number of Candles Lit on a Birthday Cake.”

This year, on the 29th birthday of Gendun Choekyi Nyima (11th Panchen Lama), SFT India, in collaboration with Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, the exile seat of the Panchen Lama, carried out a successful campaign to highlight the Panchen Lama’s case in a new and creative way. The duo set a new world record for “The Most Candles Lit on a Birthday Cake” by lighting 130,000 candles, representing the approximate number of Tibetans in exile and their wishes for the safe release of the Panchen Lama. The lighting of the candles was held at Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in South India. During the event in South India, over 500 people joined, including Tibetan Government-in-Exile representatives, community heads, NGO leaders, students, and monks and nuns. SFT chapters and networks around the world also organized various other events to observe the day.

SAY “NO” TO CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE

Since SFT launched the worldwide campaign, “Say ‘No’ to Confucius Institute,” in 2014, an increasing number of universities hosting Confucius Institutes (CIs) have canceled or decided not to renew their agreement with the Chinese government-sponsored institute.

There is growing momentum for “Say ‘No’ to CI” around the world, with students, faculty, and community members engaging in the campaign and the issue being raised at the highest government levels.

In the United States, the John McCain 2019 National Defense Authorization Act was signed into law on August 13, 2018, which bars any U.S. university from using Pentagon resources for any program involving CIs. In 2018, at least five schools have ended or committed to not renewing their contract with CI, the



Tibetans and supporters protesting UMass Boston’s potential renewal of their Confucius Institute contract.

latest being North Carolina State University. Building on this momentum, SFT continues to develop a strong and strategic campaign to counter China's propaganda and censorship. SFT also submitted a report of findings and recommendations to international governments inquiring into CIs, and unveiled the new www.saynotoci.org website to provide updates and resources.

FREE TASHI WANGCHUK



Protest at the Chinese consulate in New York. (Jonah M. Kessel/The New York Times)

Tashi Wangchuk, 31, was imprisoned after appearing in a New York Times video in which he advocated for the rights of Tibetans to learn and study in their mother tongue. SFT initiated the [#FreeTashiWangchuk](https://twitter.com/FreeTashiWangchuk) campaign in early 2017. Along with ongoing international lobbying efforts and foreign office appeals, SFT coordinated a grassroots campaign for his release and organized protests around the world. In the lead up to Tashi Wangchuk's first scheduled trial on January 4, 2018, SFT along with other Tibet groups, coordinated a global action for supporters to make phone calls to their embassies in Beijing to ask that their representatives put pressure on Chinese authorities to release Tashi Wangchuk. Two embassies, Canada's and the EU's, openly announced their request to attend the trial, and five embassies' diplomats visited Yushu in an attempt to witness the trial. Tashi was sentenced to five years in prison by Chinese authorities on May 22, 2018. SFT will continue to prioritize the campaign for his immediate and unconditional release.

ART FOR TIBET

Art for Tibet showcased the works of over 70 artists, who donated 100 pieces of art. This event brings together artists and activists from around the world to celebrate, commemorate, and support the Tibetan peoples' nonviolent freedom struggle against occupation.



A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS: FREE TIBET! ACTION CAMP



One of SFT's core priorities is to cultivate and educate leaders to sustain the global Tibetan Freedom Movement by organizing various conference, trainings, and workshops around the world. This year, SFT organized two Free Tibet! Action Camps, in Peterborough, Canada and Dharamsala, India. For these two trainings, SFT welcomed 90+ movement leaders, workshop trainers, guest speakers, volunteers, and an amazing group of participants from Bhutan, Canada, India, Ethiopia, and the United States. Through an intensive week of training and discussion, we were able to equip participants with the knowledge, tools, and networks necessary to become stronger Tibet activists.

MOVEMENT LEADERS AT FREEDOM HOUSE

In June, SFT hosted a panel discussion at Freedom House in Washington DC, titled, "Brief from the Field: Movement Leaders discuss advancing Freedom and Democracy against China's increasingly authoritarian policies under Xi." Panelists included Taiwan's Sunflower Movement leader Lin Fei-fan, Demosisto Hong Kong's Chief Researcher Jeffrey Ngo, Uyghur Human Rights Project's Zubayra Shamseden, moderated by SFT's Executive Director Dorjee Tseten. The discussion was joined by 60+ people from the community of policy makers, think tanks, civil societies, activists, and students. The speakers highlighted the intensified crackdowns by Xi Jinping across China and its occupied territories and discussed strategies to safeguard freedom, democracy, and human rights.

TIBET FEST



First organized in 2005 by Michelle Weik, Tibet Fest has grown into one of the most anticipated events bringing together Tibet supporters from around the world. This year, SFT organized the event in Goshen, Connecticut, with more than 1,000 attendees over the course of the weekend. Tibet Fest is a blend of music, food, culture, art, and dance — a place where everyone is welcome.

RECIPROCAL ACCESS TO TIBET

As a result of years of campaigning and hard work, a major milestone was achieved when the United States House of Representatives approved the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act on September 24, 2018. This is a historic piece of legislation, originally sponsored by Congressman Jim McGovern. Under this bill, Chinese authorities who are involved in the design and implementation of policies that restrict travel to Tibetan areas would become ineligible to receive a visa or be admitted to the United States. On the day the House passed the bill, Congressman McGovern said, “America’s foreign policy ought to send the message that we value human rights. That we stand with those working for freedom. That those values compel us to speak out when we see something that’s wrong. And that we will hold accountable those who violate the basic human rights we are all entitled to. And that’s exactly what this bill today is all about.”



SFT members at US Congressman Jim McGovern’s office during lobby day.

However, our work is not done yet—contact your Senators to cosponsor the bill and help get it approved by the Senate!

TIBET’S RIVERS: ASIA’S LIFELINE



This year, on World Rivers Day, SFT India took a leap of activism from India’s highest paragliding spot, Billing, Bir, to highlight the crisis of Tibet’s rivers with a banner reading, “Tibet Dries, Asia Dies.” The Tibet’s Rivers: Asia’s Lifeline campaign was started in 2015 to highlight the urgent threat Tibet’s rivers face from Chinese state-sponsored damming, mining, and water diversion. Through this campaign, SFT has mobilized a large number of Indian and Tibetan youth activists across Delhi, Bangalore, Dharamshala, Jalandhar, Pune, Mumbai, and Guwahati.

2008 UPRISING: 10 YEAR COMMEMORATION

To commemorate 10 years since the 2008 uprising in Tibet and the Beijing Olympics campaign, SFT organized numerous events and programs around the world. In New York, SFT organized an event with former Tibetan political prisoner Dhondup Wangchen as a special guest to share his story of resistance in 2008 inside Tibet. The event was also joined by many activists who were part of the international 2008 actions and the young leaders who are shaping the future of our movement. A similar event was held in San Francisco, Dharamshala and Delhi. 2008 saw unprecedented demonstrations around the world in support of the Tibetan people’s struggle for freedom and independence. It was a critical moment in Tibet’s history of resistance, reawakening a new generation of activists both inside and outside Tibet.



SFT UK NATIONAL CONFERENCE

During the month of January, SFT organized the three-day SFT UK National Conference at Pestalozzi Interna-

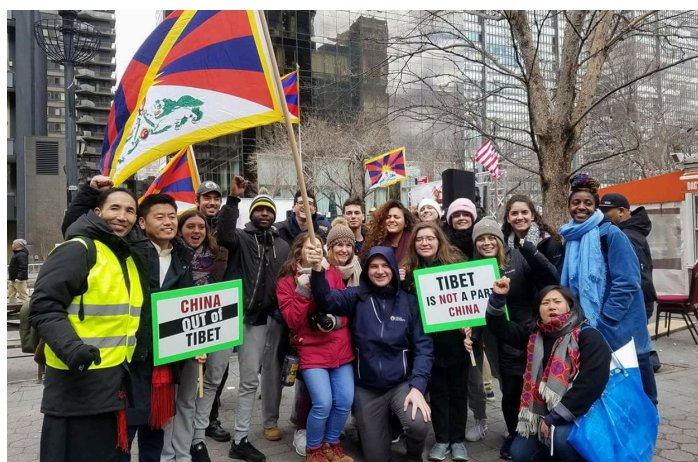
tional Village Trust to engage and inspire young Tibetans and supporters to take action for Tibet. Pestalozzi's diverse student base helped train Tibet advocates and future leaders from countries such as Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe. Participants were trained in grassroots organizing, strategic nonviolent theory, public speaking, and media communications. This conference was followed by talks on the Tibetan Freedom Movement, held at the London School of Economics and the Queen Elizabeth High School in Hexham, Northumberland.

TIBETAN INDEPENDENCE DAY COMMEMORATION



This year, on February 13, SFT's worldwide network commemorated Tibetan Independence Day. The theme of "Stand for the Tibetan National Anthem" was chosen to highlight the Tibetan people's vision of a Free Tibet, where Tibetans in Tibet and in exile are united to proudly sing the Tibetan National Anthem in front of the Potala Palace, and for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This year over 10 cities around the world joined to commemorate the day.

TIBETAN UPRISING DAY COMMEMORATION



La Salle University students join the Tibetan National Uprising Day rally in New York.

Tibetan National Uprising Day is a pivotal day in Tibetan history that marks the mass rejection and disapproval of the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959. This year, the day was observed in over 100 cities in over 30 countries around the world. Tibetans and supporters organized peaceful protests at landmarks and outside Chinese Embassies to show solidarity with the Tibetan Freedom Movement. Worldwide, SFT chapters and members joined in organizing actions and events by providing resources and support in cities including Dharamsala, Bangalore, New York, Toronto, London, San Francisco, Copenhagen, Paris, Taipei, and Japan.

For more highlights, visit our website at:

studentsforafreetibet.org



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GRASSROOTS SPOTLIGHT

Grassroots organizing is at the heart of what SFT does, made possible by the amazing work of our members and supporters around the world. Check out some of the actions, trainings, and protests they've coordinated in 2018.



SFT Delhi organized a bike rally to commemorate Tibetan Independence Day.



SFT West organized a silent sit-in and prostration in Downtown Berkeley, collecting petition signatures for the Panchen Lama's release.



SFT UK members organized the three-day UK National Conference at Pestalozzi International Village Trust to engage and inspire young Tibetans and supporters.



SFT Japan hosted International Tibet Network's 7th Tibet Network Asia Regional conference and coordinated a speaking tour for Nyima Lhamo, niece of the late Tenzin Delek Rinpoche.



SFT University of Wisconsin La Crosse organized a talk and training on "How to Build a Nonviolent Movement" during their school's Social Justice Week.



SFT joined Amnesty International USA Local Group 133's "Get on the Bus" to take action and call for Tashi Wangchuk's release at China's Mission to the UN.



SFT University of Toronto St. George tabling to recruit new members.



SFT Denmark members joined March 10, Tibetan National Uprising Day in Copenhagen.



SFT Taiwan members joined March 10, Tibetan National Uprising Day in Taipei city.



In the UK, SFT Westminster University organized a screening of "In the Name of Confucius" and discussed threats that CIs pose, with the director Doris Liu and other experts and activists.



SFT University of Massachusetts Amherst organized a Losar (Tibetan New Year) celebration event.



SFT grassroots training at Hunter College in New York.



SFT India's 2018 grassroots speaking tour reached 500+ students for Tibet.

This year, for Tibet

SFT's global network organized—



65+ Protests
& Actions



12 Trainings
& Conferences



55+ Talks



Engaging **1200+** youth in **15** countries around the world!

"After many years, this is the first time I'm enjoying the feeling of safety and freedom. I would like to thank everyone who made it possible for me to hold my wife and children in my arms again."



— DHONDUP WANGCHEN

FILMMAKER, ACTIVIST, AND FORMER POLITICAL PRISONER

Dhondup Wangchen made a daring escape into freedom after six years of imprisonment for making the film *Leaving Fear Behind*. The film boldly chronicles the honest thoughts and feelings of Tibetans living under China's rule in the lead up to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.