

Cross Party Group on Tibet - minutes **16th January 2013 – Holyrood CR3**

Attendees: Anne McTaggart, Maureen Watt, Kevin Stewart and 19 members of the public.

Apologies: Linda Fabiani, Margaret Mitchell, Jamie McGriggor, Alison Johnstone, Alison McInnes, Annabel Ewing and 10 members of the public.

Agenda

Welcome, last meeting minutes and matters arising

Human rights report

Education and Confucius Institutes

Targeting of British politicians by the Chinese Government

Tibet independence day - Feb 13th

Presentation - Democratising a virtual nation – the democratisation of the Central Tibetan Authority (Tibetan Government-in-Exile)

AoB / DoNM

Welcome and matters arising

The minutes from last meeting were confirmed. Parliamentary actions taken since the last meeting are:

- **Motion:** Human Rights for Uyghurs and Tibetans (Patricia Ferguson MSP)
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4M-05291>
- **Motion:** Tibet's Flame of Truth (Rod Campbell MSP)
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4M-04479>
- **Motion:** Further Incidents of Self-immolation in Tibet (Anne McTaggart MSP)
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4M-04738>
- **Chamber:** Anne McTaggart MSP questioning the Minister for External Affairs on China's treatment of Tibetan people
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=7551&i=68923&c=1392580>
- **FMQs:** Willie Rennie MSP questioning the DFM on meeting the Dalai Lama
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=7327&i=66776&c=1356762> (June 2012, but not reported in last minutes)

Human Rights Update

The Group heard a general update on the human rights situation in Tibet. A recent letter was shared describing the situation on the ground including the restrictions on education in Tibetan language and the communications black-out.

Education and Confucius institutes in Scotland

Discussion on the role of Chinese Government-supported Confucius institutes in Scottish universities. There is one at Edinburgh University and Glasgow University and one opening

soon in Aberdeen University that supports academic work on a China theme. No CPG actions agreed.

Lobbying of UK politicians by Chinese Government

The extent of recent lobbying was discussed. Norman Baker MP and Tim Loughton MP were reportedly banned by the Foreign Ministry from meeting the Dalai Lama during his recent visit. The Group agreed to write to the MPs to ask them the nature and reasons for this and to ask them to share any response they have had to their letter to the PM on the matter. It was also agreed to invite them to a future meeting and ask for a general update on the All Party Group on Tibet in Westminster's activities.

Tibet Independence Day - Feb 13th

Ideas for MSP action were discussed including a protest action outside Holyrood organised by EUTS, MSPs pushing for human rights considerations to form part of the forthcoming Procurement Bill, flying of the Tibetan Flag on public buildings, signatures of support on the Independence Declaration and the Government making a statement of support. EUTS will progress an event on 13th Feb which MSPs can support and the Group will circulate the Independence Declaration for support.

[UPDATE: 6/2/13 – MSP support for Feb 13th can be registered through Marco Biagi's motion S4M-05565 Tibetan Independence Day
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4M-05565>]

Tibetan Uprising Day – March 10th

The next meeting is timed to be close to March 10th and Thubten Samdup, the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for Northern Europe, will be speaking. It is hoped the Group can interest a newspaper to run a story on the issues for the date.

Presentation

The Group heard a presentation on the democratisation of the Central Tibetan Authority (Tibetan Government-in-Exile).

AoB

David Hudson received a letter from the UK Government and asks the group for comment before replying.

Specific actions

- Letter to Norman Baker MP and Tim Loughton MP – Secretary to draft
- Secretary to work with MSPs to find best way to support external Feb 13th actions and March 10th media.
- David Hudson to share letter

DoNM

Next meeting is **6th March 2013** where Thubten Samdup, the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for Northern Europe, will be speaking. This meeting will also be the **Group AGM**. Further meetings are then planned for 22nd May 2013 and 2nd Oct 2013.