

Tibet Activists on Hunger Strike in Jail No: 7

After staging a dramatic protest at the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi on April 09, 2007, demanding the release of the Panchen Lama whose whereabouts are unknown, Shibayan Raha, Campaigns Coordinator of Friends of Tibet and Tibetan activist Migmar Tsering have started a Hunger Strike in Tihar Jail No: 7. Both protesters have not been eating since yesterday morning, and this is already their second day of the hunger strike. They are neither eating solid food, nor drinking any liquid.

Shibayan Raha is the Campaigns Coordinator of Friends of Tibet and he has been running the Calcutta chapter of Friends of Tibet for the past two years. His belief in an independent Tibet has taken him to different Tibetan refugee camps in India and made him one of the strongest supporters of the cause. Shibayan created headlines last year when unfurled a banner reading: "China Get Out of Tibet and Aksai Chin" outside the Taj Hotel in Bombay just before Chinese President Hu Jintao's speech at the India-China Economic, Trade and Investment Cooperation Summit. He was then arrested and released on bail.

Migmar Tsering is a young Tibetan refugee from Majnu-ka-Tila Tibetan camp and has been working individually with his friends for a Free Tibet. He had taken part in various activities in the past including the protest campaign during Hu Jintao's visit to New Delhi last year.

Friends of Tibet's General Secretary Tenzin Tsundue, who has done a similar protests in the past says: "It will be difficult for the jail authorities to keep them any longer after 72 hours of such intensive hunger strike. If they don't release, we will take legal action and secure their release anyhow."

Many regional newspapers in North India have apparently published photos of the Chinese Embassy protest of April 9 and photos of Richard Gere from the 14th Mind and Life Conference side by side in order to show two extreme sides of the struggle.

Friends of Tibet is gravely concerned about the health of the two young activists. The Delhi chapter of Friends of Tibet is working hard for their immediate release with the help of HRLN, Delhi Regional Tibetan Youth Congress and other supporters in the city.

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Friends of Tibet is a global movement to keep alive the issue of Tibet through direct action. Our activities are aimed at ending China's occupation of Tibet and the suffering of the Tibetan people. Friends of Tibet supports the continued struggle of the Tibetan people for independence. To know more, visit:

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