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Mr. Karma Chophel, speaker of the Tibetan parliament-in-exile, along with parliamentarians Ven Geshe Thupten Phelgay, Mr. Dawa Tsering, and Mr. Kalsang Gyaltsen, paid an official visit to the hunger strikers today. On behalf of the Tibetan Parliament, Mr. Chophel expressed deep admiration, solidarity and respect to the hunger strikers.

Mr. Karma Chophel addressed the hunger strikers in the following words: "Since day one of the hunger strike, we have been hearing about its progress and the health conditions of the fourteen Tibetans through radio and other means of information. We have remained very concerned about your health conditions. Even though we were hearing that the health conditions of the hunger strikers have been almost normal, we have been highly concerned about the fact that the strike was entering the fourteenth day. Hence, at the Standing Committee Meeting, we reached a decision that we should pay a official visit to you (hunger strikers) comprising of four Member of Parliament. Although we may come from different constituencies, we don't have any sectarian or provincial discrimination, and in fact we are representative of the six million Tibetans, as advised by the Dalai Lama. But in order to show respect and solidarity to the hunger strikers representing three Cholkas and the religious community, we have instituted this delegation to represent the three Cholkas and the religious community. I represent *U-tsang* province, being the Speaker, Mr. Kalsang Gyaltsen represents *Domey*, Mr. Gyarong Dawa Tsering represents *Domey*, and Ven. Geshe Thupten Phelgay is the religious representative. On behalf of the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile, we are here to express our deep admiration and solidarity, and to honor the hunger strikers for putting their precious lives at stake for the cause of Tibet."

He further assured the strikers that, "within the boundary of the Tibetan charter and policies formulated, we are ready to extend possible assistance as needed. We are earnestly looking forward to hear from you."

Mrs. Dolkar Lhamo Kirti, Member of Parliament-in-exile, also visited the hunger strikers to express her deep admiration and solidarity for the selfless service of the hunger strikers. She emotionally expressed her deep gratitude to the sacrifice of the hunger strikers.

Dr. N.K. Trikha, the National Convener, Core Group for Tibetan Cause, and also a journalist, visited the hunger strikers to express his support.

He expressed a call for support from the international community as well as from the Indian government. "The Tibet issue is one of the greatest tragedies of human history, particularly since this happens when most of the world is free from all kinds of colonial oppression. That the Tibetans should find themselves forced to resort to this indefinite hunger strike to draw the world's attention to this tragedy is still more poignant. The world community must shed its attitude of unconcern, which in the process makes them accomplice to the Chinese barbarity. I hope that this self-inflicted ordeal of the Tibetan hunger strikers will shake the conscience of all well-meaning peoples and communities of the world, more particularly the Indian establishment, to effectively put pressure on the rulers of the PRC to free Tibet from its yoke."

Commenting on the demands of the hunger strikers, Dr. Trikha said, I think these are not demands: these are so simple. I think if you are only asking for evidence, and if the claim of the Chinese is that they are not doing what you are alleging, then they should come up and prove it, and that's all. The Movement is not asking for any rights, is only saying: 'prove yourself, that what you are doing and saying is correct.' This is not much of a demand that cannot be met. In fact, it is not a demand at all. All the demands listed are ones that any government could come forward on its own to prove with evidence that it is not so. Human rights are being violated -- everybody knows, people who go there have seen it, there are numerous reports about it. Let the Chinese prove it. But they have been shying away from it. There is no freedom of religion -- let the Chinese prove there is. Chinese are building railways in the name of Western Development Plan -- they must prove that the native Tibetans are not being marginalized in the process. Prove that the natural resources are not exploited and the environment is not being destroyed. Let the Chinese prove, prove it to the international community. The demands are just nothing but asking for some answers to some questions to the Chinese government. For all these obvious demands, if as many as fourteen Tibetans have to go on a hunger strike, and that too an indefinite one -- this is a shame, a crime and a shame on humanity. I think all humanity should come forward to exert pressure on the Chinese Government to respond. "

Looking into the likely scenario in future if China doesn't respond, Dr. Trikha thinks, "The Tibetan movement is non-violent in the spirit of Ahimsa, in the spirit, Satyagraha, of Mahatma Gandhi. If the Chinese want that the problem should be resolved in a peaceful way, in an amicable way, the Chinese should welcome this now. Otherwise, history has seen that in frustration, the strategy changing and the situation getting worse. I hope the hunger strike by so many people will not go in vain. I hope the government of India, and the governments of other countries of the world, will move rapidly to bring pressure on the People's Republic of China (PRC)."



Mr. Karma Chophel, speaker of the Tibetan parliament-in-exile alongwith parliamentarians Ven Geshe Thupten Phelgay, Mr. Dawa Tsering, and Mr. Kalsang Gyaltsen



Dr. N.K. Trikha



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Encouraging Tibetans not to lose hope, and to gear up their movement, Trikha said, "You have to raise the consciousness of the world, that is the way it is. People still have some compassion, some sympathy, some feeling for their fellow human being. And if you remain firm in your determination, to win ultimately what you are aiming at, and the world will also have to see your vision, and the world opinion will ultimately work for you. This we have seen happening elsewhere in the world: At a time when everybody had lost all hopes, they woke up to find that the Berlin wall is down overnight. And that the oppressive soviet system collapses and one country turns into 15 different nations wholly independently. This is not something that requires a great magic to happen. This has happened in the world and this will happen in the case of Tibet as well. I am quite sure about it."

Today marks the fourteenth day of the fourteen hunger strikers. The Indefinite Hunger Strike at Jantar Mantar, Delhi, is part of the Tibetan Youth Congress-led People's Movement, pressing demands for accountability from China regarding the Tibet situation. Current updates, photos, and messages to the hunger strikers can be viewed at <http://www.tibetanyouthcongress.org>

The lists of the Hunger Strikers



Ven Gelek Gyatso
Yougang, monk, 34



Ven Tsondue
Gyatso Naknya,
monk, 35



Passang Dorjee,
male, 26



Tsering Norzom,
female, 67



Jamyang Yeshe,
male, 33



Tsewang Dhargyal,
male, 65



Kesang Youdon,
female, 53



Lobsang, male, 75



Kalsang Dawa,
male, 53



Nyima Tsering,
male, 31



Karma Sonam,
male, 61



Tashi Thondu,
male, 73



Tashi Wangdue,
male, 54



Dawa Tsering,
male, 66