

# **A Statement of Concern on the Situation in Tibet from Asian NGOs**

Saturday 5 April 2008, by [Movements \(Asian\)](#) (Date first published: 3 April 2008).

We are saddened and alarmed that the peaceful protest led by Buddhist monks in the Tibetan capital on March 10, which was followed by a wave of sympathy protests in the neighboring Tibetan areas after that day, has drawn a strong response from the Chinese authorities. We also deplore the unrest that followed, even though we understand the problems that gave rise to them.

We are concerned about the police and military build-up in response to these events not only in Lhasa but also in Tibetan areas of western China.

We believe that news blockade and censorship of the media are not helpful for the Chinese people and the international community and damage the credibility of the Chinese government.

The problems in Tibet are complex and long-standing and the demands for cultural and religious freedoms are well known. However, the more recent rapid economic development of the region has created huge inequalities and further marginalized Tibetans. As we have seen in many other regions of the world, inequality and marginalization are the consequences of rapid economic development and globalization, all too often resulting in tensions and conflicts. These tensions and conflicts cannot be addressed through force and suppression, but rather through dialogue based on respect.

As concerned Asians, we call on the Chinese government to respect the aspirations of the Tibetan people, to listen seriously to their problems, and to engage in open and transparent talks with the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan groups.

We believe that violence offers no solution and we call for restraint from both sides: the Chinese government should not arrest innocent people and should give fair trial to those who allegedly committed crimes during the unrest. We also advise Tibetans to avoid attacking or destroying properties of Han Chinese and Chinese Muslims as this could result to more militarization.

We urge the authorities to continue allowing foreign and independent press to enter the region to ensure that events are reported and for arrests of protesters to be known.

Finally, we ask the governments of India and Nepal to desist from using force to disperse demonstrations by exiled Tibetans in support of their compatriots and to allow them freedom of speech and assembly.

Signed:

Alyansa ng Kabataang Mindanao Para sa Kapayapaan (AKMK), Philippines

Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma

Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development

Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD)

Association of War Affected Women, Sri Lanka

BRP – Bahujan Maha Sangh, India

BALAY Rehabilitation Center , Philippines

BanglaPraxis, Bangladesh

Bombay Urban Industrial League for Development (BUILD), India

Campaign for Popular Media Reform (CPMR), Philippines

Centre for Peace Building and Reconciliation, Sri Lanka

Committee for Asian Women

Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility (CARAM Asia )

Demokratikong Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas-Lanao, Philippines

Educational Network for Global and Grassroots Exchange , Thailand / US

EKTA (Committee for Communal Amity), Mumbai, India

EQUAL GROUND, Sri Lanka

Focus on the Global South

Forum Asia

Foundation for Media Alternatives, Philippines

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)

Human Rights Working Group, Indonesia

Institute for Global Justice (IGJ), Indonesia

Institute for Popular Democracy (IPD), Philippines

International Gender and Trade Network-Asia

International Friends for Global Peace, Sri Lanka

International Women's Rights Action Watch - Asia Pacific

KAISA – KA, Philippines

Lanao Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (LAHRA), Philippines

Lanao Fisherfolks Advocacy Network (LFAN), Philippines

Law & Society Trust , Sri Lanka

Liga ng Makabagong Kabataan (LMK), Philippines

LIPS / Sedane Labor Resource Center, Indonesia

Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement (MPPM), Philippines

Mindanao Tri-People Women Forum (MTWF), Philippines

Nonviolence International - Southeast Asia

Northern Development Foundation, Thailand

Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace & Democracy, India

Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER), Pakistan .

Peoples Media Initiative, India

Peoples Partner for Development and Democracy (PPDD), Thailand

Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties, India

Ranao Tri-People Movement for Genuine Peace and Development, Philippines

Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN), Thailand

Social Development & Research Organization, Sri Lanka

Society for Alternative Media and research, Pakistan

Solidarity Workshop International, Bangladesh

Southeast Asian Press Alliance

South Asia Left Democratic Alliance - Canada

Sumpay Mindanao , Philippines

Transnationals Information Exchange Asia (TIE Asia )

World March of Women – Asian members

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**Sign-up letter sent before the statement was issued**

Dear friends,

The situation in Tibet is deeply worrying. The demonstrations which began on March 10, 2008 in Tibet that turned into riots since March 14 in neighboring areas are stunning expressions of defiance and frustration against 57 years of Chinese rule. We ask for your support for the statement below, which we will send to China's president Hu Jintao.

Within China a group of 15 very credible and influential academics already issued a statement in Shanghai that diverged from the official line last Monday. It shows that there is also a raging debate inside China about the government's handling of the protests. However, majority of the people in China and the Chinese government at this point is resentful of critical views that are coming from various parts because they feel that the world does not understand the real nature of the demonstrations in the Tibetan areas. Beijing is doing everything it can to censor information but there are many blogs and discussions in the internet.

We will send this as a statement from ASIAN NGOs and movements. Kindly send your organizational support by Friday, 10:00 (Bangkok time) so we can send it before lunch.

Thank you very much.

Dorothy Guerrero

Focus on the Global South

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We are concerned about the police and military build-up in response to these events not only in Lhasa but also in Tibetan areas of western China.

We believe that the current news blockade and censorship of the media are not helpful for the Chinese people and the international community and damage the credibility of the Chinese government.

The problems in Tibet are complex and long-standing and the demands for cultural and religious freedoms are well known. However, the more recent rapid economic development of the region has created huge inequalities and further marginalized Tibetans. As we have seen in many other regions of the world, inequality and marginalization are the consequences of rapid economic development and globalization, all too often resulting in tensions and conflicts. These tensions and conflicts cannot be addressed through force and suppression, but rather through dialogue

based on respect.

As concerned Asians, we call on the Chinese government to respect the aspirations of the Tibetan people, to listen seriously to their problems, and to engage in open and transparent talks with the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan groups.

We believe that violence offers no solution and we call for restraint from both sides: the Chinese government should not arrest innocent people and should give fair trial to those who allegedly committed crimes during the riots. We also advise Tibetans to avoid attacking or destroying properties of civilian ethnic Chinese and Muslims as this could result to more militarization.

We urge the authorities to allow foreign and independent press to enter the region to ensure that events are reported and for arrests of protesters or suspected rioters to be known.

Finally, we ask the governments of India and Nepal to desist from using force to disperse demonstrations by exiled Tibetans in support of their compatriots and to allow them freedom of speech and assembly.

Signed:

Focus on the Global South (Thailand, Philippines, India)