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Fax Transmission

Date: March 19, 2008 2 pages
TO: The Honourable Maxime Bernier, Minister of Foreign Affairs
ph 613-995-1851 fx 613-996-3443
FR: Michael Craig, Chair, China Rights Network
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RE: **Human Rights Crisis in China and Tibet**

Dear Minister,

The China Rights Network, like, we imagine, the government of Canada, is deeply concerned about the brutal crackdown on protesters in Lhasa and other Tibetan areas of China. As many as 100 Tibetans have died in clashes with police and the military. Remarkably, and quite sadly, not even the Chinese government claims that these demonstrators were armed. So it's a case of passive resistance and some rock throwing being met with overwhelming, deadly force.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, absurdly accused of orchestrating the protests, asked the Chinese government a few days ago, to "stop using force and address the long-simmering resentment of the Tibetan people." While he does not call for independence for Tibet, and insists that the Tibetan people must live peacefully with the Chinese in their midst, he correctly characterizes the treatment of Tibetans in their own land as "cultural genocide". One of the wisest, most peace-loving men on this planet is being vilified by a Chinese government that has killed dozens of protesters and arrested hundreds.

You have no doubt heard that the President of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Poettering, in a German radio interview, backed the idea of a boycott of the opening ceremonies at the Beijing Olympic Games in August if the violence continues in Tibet. Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner of France described this proposal as "interesting" and other European leaders are also considering it.

China Rights Network does not call for a full boycott of the Olympic Games. Rather, like other human rights organizations, we hope to use the Games to demand that China deliver on its promises of human rights reform – promises that, thus far, have meant little or nothing. That being said, we do strongly support the idea that senior government leaders, including yourself and Prime Minister Harper, inform the Chinese government and the world that you will not attend the Opening Ceremonies unless the Tibet uprising is resolved quickly with no further bloodshed.

We would like to know how you react to this proposal.

May we also respectfully suggest that you ask some pointed questions of His Excellency LU Shumin, Ambassador for the People's Republic of China, concerning the Tibetan protesters who have been detained. In particular:

- Who and where are they?
- Have they been given access to their families, lawyers and medical attention as required by international law?
- Can the Ambassador assure you that they have not been tortured or ill-treated while in custody?
- Will they be charged immediately with internationally recognizable offences and tried in proceedings which meet international fair trial standards?

These are valid and vital questions which, if asked by Canada's Foreign Ministry, might prevent torture and assure fair trials.

Asking such questions and taking such action is not, in our view, interference in the internal affairs of China. It is simply and legitimately a case of standing up for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mr. Bernier, the Tibetan people are counting on Canada, counting on you. We look forward to action from the government of Canada. I can be reached, if need be, at my email address above.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Craig