

February 12th, 2007**Contacts:** Dawa Dorjee 415.867.1998, Yangchen Lhamo 206.963.1150, Tsering Gyurmey 510.390.6771

Tibetans Call for Freedom and Protest Egregious Atrocities

Schedule:

- **9:00:** Tibetan flag-raising at **Berkeley City Hall**, 2180 Milvia Street
- **11:00:** March through Chinatown commences at **Justin Herman Plaza**, Market & Embarcadero
- **12:00:** Function begins at **Portsmouth Square**, followed by continuation of march
- **1:30:** Function begins at **San Francisco City Hall**, followed by continuation of march
- **3:30:** March ends at **Chinese Consulate**, Laguna & Geary Blvd.
- **6:30:** Candlelight vigil at **Union Square**

San Francisco – Hundreds of Tibetans and supporters will gather in the Bay Area as part of a worldwide commemoration of Tibetan National Uprising Day, March 10 1959, when Chinese troops crushed a Tibetan mass uprising and sealed their occupation of the Himalayan nation. Protesters will express their outrage at the Chinese government's brutality in Tibet with extended marches and rallies, including daily protest outside the Chinese consulate from March 5th-9th. In a powerfully symbolic action, on March 10th protestors will undertake a silent march through Chinatown, and congregate at other key locations in Berkeley and San Francisco.

Recent atrocities have heightened the resolve of Tibetans around the world to step up the nonviolent struggle for their country's freedom. Last October, eyewitness accounts and video footage from foreign mountaineers spurred international outcry at the ruthless murder and imprisonment by Chinese border patrol of unarmed Tibetan refugees. The border patrol shot and killed a 17-year-old nun, wounded a young man and imprisoned dozens of Tibetans, including many small children, attempting to escape to Nepal. In early February, one of the refugees, 15-year-old Jamyang Samten escaped to India, bringing with him firsthand accounts of the torture and humiliation inflicted upon him and over 30 others who were detained with him. "The Chinese border guards' recent slaying of unarmed Tibetans is a painful reminder of the horrendous suffering Tibetans continue to face daily while their nation remains occupied by China," said Dawa Dorjee, president of the San Francisco Tibetan Youth Congress. "International governments must recognize the urgency of the situation in Tibet and exert meaningful pressure on the Chinese government to end their illegal occupation of our country."

The rapid approach of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, widely regarded by human rights activists as a forum for the Chinese regime to legitimize its occupation of Tibet and present itself to the world as a modernized nation, also charges this year's protests with a sense of urgency. Says Students for a Free Tibet regional coordinator Yangchen Lhamo, "It is incomprehensible that the Olympics, symbolizing global harmony and cooperation, could take place in China, illegal occupier of Tibet and continued human rights violator. The Chinese government hopes to have a glorious coming out party in 2008, but so long as it occupies Tibet and represses its own people, the Olympics will be marred by protests."

"Signs of frustration amongst Tibetans are rising day by day- China must not miss the opportunity to put out the fire before it burns out of control," said Tsering Gyurmey, general secretary of the Tibetan Association of Northern California. "A good start would be to commence earnest negotiations with the Dalai Lama to resolve the Tibet-China conflict," he added. Over a thousand Tibetan refugees call the Bay Area their home, many of them survivors of the exodus over the Himalayas triggered by the Dalai Lama's covert escape at the end of March 1959. For the latest information on Bay Area commemoration activities, visit www.freetibetmarch.org.

Organizers & Sponsors: San Francisco Tibetan Youth Congress * Tibetan Association of Northern California * Students for a Free Tibet * Bay Area Friends of Tibet * Committee of 100 for Tibet * Tibet Justice Center