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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## STAND UP FOR THE MARTYRS OF TIBET

(San Francisco, CA) San Francisco Team Tibet, a coalition of Tibetan organizations in the Bay Area, will hold a candlelight vigil on Wednesday, February 8, 2012 in front of the Chinese Consulate, 1450 Laguna Street, San Francisco, CA 94115, from 6:30-9:30 p.m.

The vigil is part of a worldwide effort by the international community to stand up together and demonstrate solidarity with the people of Tibet in response to gruesome killings of unarmed Tibetans by armed Chinese government police thugs. In the most recent incidents, Chinese government police fired indiscriminately on hundreds of unarmed Tibetans who had gathered peacefully on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012 to claim their basic human rights, which have been systematically repressed since the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959. Six Tibetans were reportedly killed and at least 60 more injured, some critically. A new report states that a seventh Tibetan was shot and killed when police fired on civilians a third time last week.

Sources in Tibet report that the denial of basic human rights, the increasing destruction of the fragile environment, economic marginalization of Tibetans and the Chinese effort to suppress Tibetan cultural traditions and even the Tibetan language, are responsible for mounting resentment and anger among Tibetans, particularly since the Chinese government brutally mowed down a massive uprising in 2008. Tibetans are determined to leave fear behind in their struggle for the return of their national sovereignty and their most beloved leader, His Holiness the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. Tibet remains in virtual lockdown to this day.

Since that time, Tibetans have become increasingly desperate as evidenced by a wave of 17 self-immolations - 16 since March 2011 – by Tibetan monks and nuns. Twelve of the 17 have died. Under Chinese law, it is against the law to even display a photograph of the revered Tibetan religious leader, the Dalai Lama. On January 26<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the democratically elected political leader of the Tibetan government-in-exile, called for a “Loud and clear message to the Chinese government that violence and killing of innocent Tibetans is unacceptable!”

He added, “I want to tell my dear brothers and sisters inside Tibet that we hear your cries loud and clear. We urge you not to despair and to refrain from extreme measures. We feel your pain and will not allow the sacrifices you have made to go in vain. You are all in our hearts and prayers each and every day.”

He has also requested that all vigils on February 8<sup>th</sup> be conducted peacefully and with dignity.

For further information, contact Bay Area Friends of Tibet at 415-264-3264 or e-mail [bafot@friends-of-tibet.org](mailto:bafot@friends-of-tibet.org).

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**NOTE:** high resolution image of Lobsang Sangay will be made available

**NOTE: San Francisco Team Tibet** comprises Bay Area Friends of Tibet, Students for a Free Tibet, Tibetan Association of Northern California, San Francisco Regional Tibetan Youth Congress, and associate members such as the Committee of 100 for Tibet, members of Nechung Buddhist Center and Gyuto Vajrayana Buddhist Center, OccupySF.