



**For immediate release: 8 January 2025**

## **TIBET EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS NEED HELP, NOT HARM**

Tibetans and Tibet organisations around the world are deeply saddened by the devastating earthquake [1] that struck Chinese-occupied Tibet on 7 January 2025 [2].

At this critical moment, the safety and welfare of those affected by the earthquake must be given full priority. To this end, we call on world governments to provide support and oversight to all of China’s disaster relief efforts in order to ensure impacted Tibetan communities receive the required aid and assistance. They must also ensure the Chinese government does not use its earthquake response as a pretext to further its colonial policies in Tibet as it did following the 2010 earthquake in Jyekundo སྐྱུ་ཡུལ་རྒྱུ་རྒྱུ་མཉམ་པོ་། in Yushul ཡུལ་མཉམ་པོ་། in the eastern Tibetan province of Kham བཅས་མཉམ་པོ་། [3]. They should also impress upon Beijing that it must not punish Tibetans who share information or attempt to contact family and friends about the impact of the earthquake or its response.

We further call on the international community – especially governments and media organisations – to use Tibetan place names in any statements or reporting, both as a matter of historical accuracy and respect for the cultural identity of the Tibetan people. This includes, for example, using Shigatse instead of the Chinese name Xigaze, and Tibet instead of the Chinese name Xizang. The Chinese government is engaged in a campaign to literally erase the word Tibet from the map in an effort to reduce recognition of Tibet as an entity separate from China [4].

The earthquake has exacerbated the existing vulnerabilities of the Tibetan people, who have suffered for more than seven decades under China’s violent occupation of their nation. Tibet advocacy groups worldwide will continue to do everything in our power to fight for the fundamental rights and dignity of the Tibetan people and for the restoration of freedom in Tibet.

### **Notes To Editor:**

1. The epicentre was recorded in Tibet’s Tsogo སུ་གོ་ཁྱེ་རྫོང་། township (Chinese: 措果 Cuoguo) in Dingri འོ་རྩ་རྩི་རྫོང་། county (Chinese: 定日 Ding ri) in Shigatse བཀའ་ལྷན་རྫོང་། prefecture (Chinese: 日喀则 Rikaze). Chinese state media says at least 126 people have died, more than 188 have been injured, and about 1,000 houses were damaged in the quake

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/07/tibet-earthquake-holy-city-of-shigatse-nepal-magnitude-quake>

For further context, Shigatse is also home to Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, the seat of the Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who was kidnapped by China in 1995 at the age of 6 years old. The Chinese government has since groomed and promoted a fake Panchen Lama in an effort to co-opt Tibetan Buddhism. The city is considered a holy city and holds immense religious significance to the Tibetan people.

2. The U.S. Geological Survey said the earthquake measured magnitude 7.1 and was relatively shallow at a depth of about 10 kilometers (6 miles)  
<https://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/eventpage/us6000pi9w/executive>
3. Jyekundo མེ་ཁྲུང་ལོ་པ་རྒྱལ་ཁོངས་རྫོང་། is in Yushul ཡུ་ཤུ་རྫོང་། in the eastern Tibetan Province of Kham ཁམས། (Chinese: 玉树 Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, 青海 Qinghai Province) See: *China: Yushu Is a Tibetan Town Rebuilt in Beijing's Image*, Time, 14 April, 2015 <https://time.com/3820739/yushu-jyekundo-earthquake-china-tibet/>
4. See, for example, *Tibet Must Stand!*, Tsering Shakya, SOAS China Institute, <https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/china-institute/2024/12/11/tibet-must-stand/> and *China's external propaganda on Tibet: Erasing Tibet to 'tell a good Chinese story,'* International Campaign for Tibet, <https://savetibet.org/chinas-external-propaganda-on-tibet>
5. **His Holiness the Dalai Lama** has commented on the earthquake, stating: *"I am deeply saddened to learn of the devastating earthquake that struck Dingri in Tibet and the surrounding regions this morning. It has caused the tragic loss of many lives, numerous injuries, and extensive destruction to homes and property. I offer my prayers for those who have lost their lives and extend my wishes for a swift recovery to all who have been injured."*  
<https://www.dalailama.com/news/his-holiness-the-dalai-lama-expresses-deep-sadness-over-the-earthquake-in-tibet>

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