

## RESOLUTION NO. 61-12

### RECOGNITION OF THE RICHMOND TIBETAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND THAT ACTS OF SELF-IMMOLATION REFLECT IMMEASUREABLE SACRIFICE IN REACTION TO THE EXTREME REPRESSIVE CONDITIONS OF THE TIBETAN PEOPLE IN CHINA

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**WHEREAS**, community groups in RICHMOND have been actively engaged in the struggle for Tibetan self-determination and have engaged in protest in solidarity with self-immolations by Tibetans in China<sup>[iii]</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, self-immolation is an act of peaceful resistance by Tibetans used to protest the Chinese repressive policy in Tibet and is the only option left for Tibetans in Tibet to speak out for their rights and to be heard by the world; and

**WHEREAS** since February 27, 2009, thirty-five self-immolations by Tibetans have taken place in Eastern Tibet, and two more young Tibetans burned themselves in India to show their support to peaceful resistance in Tibet; and

**WHEREAS**, a recent report by Human Rights Watch finds that, following the March 16, 2011 immolation incident armed personnel surrounded Kirti Monastery and cut off access to food and water for several days, while more than 1,000 Tibetans engaged in peaceful protests. Chinese police and paramilitary officers were subsequently dispatched to the monastery to carry out a compulsory "patriotic education" campaign. On April 21 2011, more than 300 monks were removed from Kirti Monastery and detained in unspecified locations to undergo several weeks of "legal education." As of October 12 2011, there are approximately 2,000 fewer monks living at Kirti Monastery, compared to the total number in March<sup>[iiii]</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, findings in a recent assessment by Human Rights Watch suggest a causal relationship between the self-immolations and sharp increases in public security spending for Ngaba and Kardze counties and the resulting security crackdowns in these largely Tibetan-habited regions<sup>[iv]</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, published Chinese government spending for public security includes expenditures for paramilitary units known as the People's Armed Police, security raids, arbitrary detentions, permanent police presence and increased surveillance within monasteries, and other police-state infrastructure<sup>[v]</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, government security measures have subjected monastic and lay Tibetans to collective punishment, and monks are being charged with intentional homicide<sup>[vi]</sup>, a capital offence, for allegedly assisting self-immolations; and

**WHEREAS**, self-immolation has presented a critical means of political expression in atmospheres of severe political and social repression<sup>[vii]</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, a single act of self-immolation, by Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia, impacted the speed and breadth of the so-called "Arab Spring"<sup>[viii]</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, beginning with Thích Quảng Đức, Vietnamese monks utilized self-immolation as protest during the Vietnam War,<sup>[ix]</sup> contributing to the fall of South Vietnam's Diem regime in the same year (1963); and

**WHEREAS**, the Tibetan Association of Northern California has located its office and community center in Richmond, enriching all of us in Richmond and adding to the overall diversity of our community; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Richmond deeply appreciates the Tibetan community here in the Bay Area and deeply regrets the loss of life of the Tibetan student, Sonam Choedon, who was one of the victims of the recent shootings at Oikos University in Oakland on April 2 of this year; and

**WHEREAS**, the Human Rights and Human Relations Commission that advises the Richmond City Council on all matters relating to the City of Richmond's role on issues of human and civil rights (Richmond Municipal Code (RMC) Chapter 3.58) has passed this resolution in support of the Tibetan people and is asking the Richmond City Council to do the same; and

**WHEREAS**, The Richmond City Council has the opportunity to demonstrate support for the Tibetan people, along with other elected officials including the Berkeley City Council, Senator Diane Feinstein and Congress member George Miller, who have all introduced resolutions in support of Tibetans and their human rights struggle.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Richmond City Council in affirmation of the shared belief in protest and civic engagement of the people of the City of Richmond, and in recognition of the Richmond Tibetan-American community, recognizes these acts of self-immolation as a reflection of the extremely repressive conditions to which the Tibetan people are subjected; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the residents of Richmond have continually demonstrated their concern for justice based on equality among all peoples, and the Richmond City Council hereby recognizes the immeasurable sacrifice of the Tibetan immolators; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Richmond City Council strongly urges the Obama Administration to call upon China to reject the use of misleading and culpability-evading language such as "terrorism in disguise" to describe the immolations<sup>[xi]</sup>; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that that the Richmond City Council urges the Obama Administration to insist that China allow members of the media and international independent fact-finding delegations to visit the affected regions; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Richmond City Council urges the Obama Administration to insist that China immediately end excessive security measures on Tibetan monasteries and lay communities in the affected regions and work towards a resolution that will affirm the right of its minority populations to social equality and freedoms of speech, assembly, and demonstration, as well as freedom of religious practice, as outlined in the Preamble and Articles 4, 35 and 36 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China<sup>[xii]</sup>; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that copies of this resolution, with personally addressed cover letters, be sent to the Chinese Consulate; Office of the Prime Minister of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile; Representative Barbara Lee; Senator Dianne Feinstein; Senator Barbara Boxer; Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; Maria Otero, Undersecretary and Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues; Gary Locke, United States Ambassador to the People's Republic of China; Lobsang Nyandak, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's Representative to North America; the Tibetan Association of Northern California; and the San Francisco Regional Tibetan Youth Congress.

<sup>[i]</sup>Self-Immolation Fact Sheet (2012, February 10). Retrieved from <http://www.savetibet.org/resource-center/maps-data-fact-sheets/self-immolation-fact-sheet>

<sup>[ii]</sup>Hands off Ngaba, Candle Light Vigil San Francisco CA Oct 14th. Dir. San Francisco Regional Tibetan Youth Congress (SFRTYC). Web. 16 Oct 2011.

<sup>[iii]</sup>[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUiMIajLBUo&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUiMIajLBUo&feature=player_embedded); 9 major community-organized protests have taken place in the Bay Area in the last year alone, specific to the immolations (confirmed through announcements released by SFRTYC, Students for a Free Tibet Bay Area chapters, and Tibetan Association of Northern California.)

<sup>[iv]</sup>Human Rights Watch. (2011, October 12). China: end crackdown on Tibetan monasteries. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/10/12/china-end-crackdown-tibetan-monasteries>

<sup>[v]</sup>Between 2002 and 2006, public security spending per capita in Ngaba was three times the average in non-Tibetan areas. By 2009, per capita annual spending on public security in Ngaba and Kardze counties was five times the average spent per person on public security in non-Tibetan areas of Sichuan. "Appendix: Spending on Security in Aba Prefecture." Human Rights Watch. N.p., n.d.

Web. 23 Oct 2011. [http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related\\_material/Appendix - Spending on Security in Aba Prefecture.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/Appendix_Spending_on_Security_in_Aba_Prefecture.pdf).

<sup>[v]</sup>[http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related\\_material/Appendix%20-%20Spending%20on%20Security%20in%20Aba%20Prefecture.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/Appendix%20-%20Spending%20on%20Security%20in%20Aba%20Prefecture.pdf)

<sup>[vi]</sup> Another two Tibetan monks sentenced in self-immolation, murder case. (2011, August 31). Retrieved from [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-08/31/c\\_131085859.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-08/31/c_131085859.htm)

<sup>[vii]</sup> Sanburn, J. (2011, January 20). A brief history of self-immolation. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2043123,00.html>

<sup>[viii]</sup> Ryan, Y. (2011, January 20). The tragic life of a street vendor. Retrieved from <http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/features/2011/01/201111684242518839.html>

<sup>[ix]</sup> "Vietnam War: Disturbing Images." Photograph. Life Magazine. First Last. 1963. Web. 23 Oct 2011. <<http://www.life.com/gallery/23010/image/3285440/vietnam-war-disturbing-images>

<sup>[x]</sup> Branigan, Tania. (2011, October 19). "Dalai Lama's Prayers for Tibetans 'Terrorism in Disguise', China says." <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/oct/19/dalai-lama-prayers-tibetans-terrorism>

<sup>[xi]</sup> "Constitution of the People's Republic of China." People's Daily Online. Retrieved from <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/constitution/constitution.html>

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I certify that the foregoing resolution was passed and adopted by the Council of the City of Richmond at a regular meeting thereof held on May 15, 2012, by the following vote:

AYES:	Councilmembers Bates, Beckles, Boozé, Butt, Ritterman, Vice Mayor Rogers, and Mayor McLaughlin.
NOES:	None.
ABSTENTIONS:	None.
ABSENT:	None.

DIANE HOLMES  
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CLERK OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND

(SEAL)

Approved:

GAYLE MCLAUGHLIN  
Mayor

Approved as to form:

BRUCE GOODMILLER  
City Attorney

State of California            }  
County of Contra Costa        : ss.  
City of Richmond             }

I certify that the foregoing is a true copy of Resolution No. 61-12, finally passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Richmond at a regular meeting held on May 15, 2012.