

**Tibet Justice Center Releases Legal Memorandum on Dalai Lama's  
Historic Devolution of Power; Urges Dalai Lama as Head of State,  
Checks and Balances, and More Deliberative Process for Amending Constitution**

**For Immediate Release**

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Press release and complete memorandum available at:  
[www.tibetjustice.org/dalailamadevolution](http://www.tibetjustice.org/dalailamadevolution)

May 13, 2011 – Tibet Justice Center today released *Legal Issues Implicated by the Dalai Lama's Devolution of Power*, a [legal memorandum](#) that sets out issues of constitutional and international law related to His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's historic decision to devolve his political power as head of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. The memorandum also calls for a longer decision-making timeline in approving related constitutional amendments.

The release of the memorandum – in Tibetan and English languages – comes just one week before the Second Tibetan National General Meeting, which will consider amendments to the Charter of the Tibetans in Exile, the constitution of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, including what future role the Dalai Lama might play as head of state.

“As His Holiness the Dalai Lama voluntarily devolves his power, critical legal questions remain,” said Professor Robert D. Sloane, chairman of Tibet Justice Center. “The legal issues surrounding this devolution not only address the vitality of Tibetan democracy, but also help to frame the historical and continuing legitimacy of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.”

The decision by the Dalai Lama comes at a time when Tibetans in exile recently elected a new Parliament and new Prime Minister, Harvard legal researcher Lobsang Sangay. The People's Republic of China prevented Tibetans in Tibet from joining in this exercise of their democratic franchise.

“A successful democracy benefits from an orderly, peaceful, deliberative, and inclusive process in distributing constitutional authority,” said Nima Binara, a Tibetan-American lawyer and member of the board of directors of Tibet Justice Center. “That His Holiness the Dalai Lama is voluntarily devolving his power to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's democratic institutions provides a beacon of hope in a world still challenged by tyranny and dictatorship.”

Tibet Justice Center's memorandum, available at [www.tibetjustice.org/dalailamadevolution](http://www.tibetjustice.org/dalailamadevolution), also outlines how variants of successful modern constitutional monarchies can inform a uniquely Tibetan democratic system. “We have outlined a legal framework, rooted in four centuries of Tibetan history, that would assure, under international law, the continuing legitimacy of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile by establishing the Dalai Lama as ceremonial head of state,” said John Isom, executive director of Tibet Justice Center. “We also describe suggested checks and balances to ensure that the Tibetan democratic institutions function effectively in the coming years. Perhaps most importantly, we stress that this decision-making process must not be carried out in haste, but should be given enough time and input to reach a well-informed decision.”

**About Tibet Justice Center**

Tibet Justice Center – formerly the International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet – is a non-governmental organization comprised of Tibetan and American lawyers, law professors, and advocates who for over

twenty years have used legal action and education to advocate for human rights and self-determination for the Tibetan people.

TJC's mission includes ongoing engagement with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, which has included legislative and judicial trainings to help further the development of Tibetan democratic institutions and practices in exile. In 1997, TJC assisted in the rewrite of the Tibetan Charter for internal consistency and consistency with Indian law. TJC has also contributed a range of reports, submissions to the United Nations, and other initiatives related to human rights, democracy, and governance. Please visit [www.tibetjustice.org](http://www.tibetjustice.org) for more information.