

## **Tibetans offer 20,000 butter lamps for China quake victims**

Tibetans offering prayer and butter lamps for China quake victims at Buddha Park, Swayambhu, Kathmandu on Sunday. (Photo by Tenzin Choephel/Phayul.com)

Kathmandu, May 18 - Marking one week of the devastating earthquake in China that claimed over 14,866 lives, the Nepal Tibetan Solidarity Forum organized special prayers and offered 10,000 butter lamps each at two of the holiest Buddhist sites in Nepal: the Boudanath Stupa and the Swayambhunath Stupa for all the victims. The prayers and offering were also meant for the estimated 100,000 who lost their lives due to the killer cyclone in Myanmar as well the Tibetan victims of the Chinese crackdown in March.

According to a statement made by the Forum, "This Condolence Prayer Congregation is to pray for all those who lost their lives and all those who are injured due to the catastrophic earth quake in South West China on 12 May, we offer heartfelt condolence to the bereaved families at this tragic moment in their lives".

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The special prayer congregation was led by monks from different monasteries in the two areas respectively. The prayer service was held at Buddha Park in front of three big statues of Chenresig, Woepakme and Guru Rinpoche in Swayambhunath and in front of the Majartsima Temple at Boudanath Stupa. The prayer service was attended by over 400 people at both the locations including Tibetan MPs, local officials, students, general public and Mr. Sudeep Pathak, senior Nepali Human Rights activist who has supported and spoken out publicly in defense of human rights of Tibetans in Nepal on several occasions.

Mr. Gonpo Tashi, Tibetan Welfare Officer of Swayambhu and City areas told Phayul, "We are Tibetan Buddhists, we pray for the well being of all sentient beings, today we are particularly praying for recent victims of the natural disaster in China and Burma but it is also meant for our fellow Tibetans who were killed by Chinese authorities recently in Tibet". His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Kashag of the Central Tibetan Administration have also extended deep sympathy and heartfelt condolences and prayers to those families who have been directly affected by the strong earthquake.

The Regional Tibetan Youth Congress Kathmandu which organized two different campaigns earlier have also announced a temporary halt to all their activities in Kathmandu for one week. However, one of the volunteers told Phayul, "We might resume our protest in about four days because Chinese authorities are continuing their crackdown in Tibet". According to Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), Chinese authorities have arrested 55 nuns of Pang-ri on 14th May and 12 nuns of Drakar Nunnery on 11th and 12th May in Kardze County, (Ch: Ganzi) Kardze "TAP", Sichuan Province for not denouncing the Dalai Lama and not following the patriotic re-education campaign indicating continued repression and crackdown in Tibet.