

CTA takes position on Olympic torch protests

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(AFP) The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in Dharamsala asserted that people had a right to oppose China's "appalling" rights violations in Tibet tacitly backed during the Olympic torch relay. "As long as they are peaceful, it's the right of any NGO or individuals to protest the appalling human rights abuses that are going on in Tibet", CTA spokesman Thubten Samphel, told AFP. He said the Dalai Lama still backed China's rights to hold the Games, but did not speak out against ongoing protests in India and abroad. "We support the right of China to host the Games which will make it better integrated with the international community". "Also, the Dalai Lama has made appeals to NGOs that since we are guests in India, we must abide and respect the sensitivities of the Indian government towards China", Samphel said in a guarded statement. He also argued the protests that dogged the torch relay in London and Paris were "largely peaceful". The head of CTA, Samdhong Rinpoche, said the CTA were open to a dialogue with China, and Beijing was sending many signals through "all kinds of channels". "But they are mixed signals. We are not able to understand", he said.

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