

2015/16 Tibetan Elections: Frequency Asked Questions

Office of Tibet – Washington, DC

Q1. What are the dates for the Primary and Final Election?

Primary election: Sunday, October 18, 2015.

Final election: Sunday, March 20, 2016.

Q2. What are the requirements for Tibetan in North America to participate in the election?

There are three mandatory requirements to participate in the election:

1. Must be 18 years old (born on or before October 18, 1997)
2. Must register as a voter with their local Tibetan Association
3. Must have paid their annual Green Book contribution for year 2014 to vote in the Primary election, and must have paid their annual Green Book contribution for year 2015 to vote in Final election.

Q3. When is the registration deadline?

Tuesday August 25, 2015 for those residing in North America

Q4. How can I know whether I am already a registered voter or not?

Please check the last few pages of your Green Book, which should list your voter registration number.

Q5. If I am a North American resident and was registered to vote in the 2010/11 elections, then do I have to re-register again for the 2015/16 elections?

No. However, you will have to make sure your Green Book contributions are up-to-date.

Q6. Am I required to register if I already registered in India, Nepal or Bhutan but came recently to the US or Canada?

Tibetans arriving in North America for family visits, vacation and business on short-term stay are eligible to vote in North America provided they have a prior voter registration from their place of origin. However, they can cast vote only for Sikyong.

Q7. How many polling stations are in North America?

There will be at least one polling station in each of the thirty Tibetan Associations in North America. In some cities, there could be more than one polling station. The Office of Tibet website and the websites of local Tibetan Associations will list all the polling stations with their addresses as we get closer to the elections.

Q8. Do I need to bring my Tibetan Green Book at the time of voting?

Yes. It is mandatory to have your Tibetan Green Book at the time of voting.

Q9. Do I have to vote in a primary election in order to vote in the final election?

No. However, it is advisable to participate in both the Primary and the Final elections in order to select the best candidates for Sikyong and two Chithues in North America.

Q10. What are the eligibility requirements for running for the Sikyong office?

Any Tibetan interested in running for Sikyong office must meet the following requirements:

- Must be of 35 years of age
- No report of mental illness by any judicial court or physician
- No report of inability to pay any debt
- No conviction by any criminal court
- No disqualification by 2/3rd majority by the Tibetan Parliament
- Must not have served two consecutive terms as Sikyong or Kalon already
- As per Tibetan Charter section 29(3), one must not have been replaced as a Sikyong
- Must not be a person carrying any act/s or holding position or receiving any monetary benefit from or for any country that goes against the aspiration of Tibetan people

Q11. What are the eligibility requirements for running for the Chithue office?

Any Tibetan interested in running for the North American Chithue position must meet the following requirements:

- Must be of 25 years of Age
- No report of mental illness by any judicial court or physician
- No report of inability to pay any debt
- No conviction by any criminal court
- Must not be a staff of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). If any CTA staff member is elected in primary election and decides to run in the final election, then he/she must resign from the Central Tibetan Administration

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- Must not be a person carrying any act/s or holding position or receiving any monetary benefit from or for any country that goes against the aspiration of Tibetan people
- Must not be against or contradict election rules and regulations, and any other rules or laws approved by the Tibetan Parliament in Exile.

Q12. How many Chithue seats are allocated for North America?

There are two Chithue positions up for an election.

Q13. How can Tibetans in locations where there isn't an Office of Tibet affiliated Tibetan Association vote?

There are two options:

1. Register with the nearest Tibetan Association before August 25, 2015 and go to their polling station on voting day
2. Contact the Office of Tibet in Washington, DC at otdc@tibet.net or [212.213.5010](tel:212.213.5010) (Ext. 203) for further instructions. However, you must opt for first option before August 25, 2015 and opt for second option before August 15, 2015.

Q14. Where do I find the latest election rules and regulations?

The latest copy of Election Rules & Regulations was handed to all thirty Tibetan Associations during the Tenshug program in New York City on July 10, 2015. An electronic copy is readily available at Tibetan Parliament in Exile website here (Tibetan): <http://goo.gl/Zvx3Ud>

Q15. What information do I need to fill on the ballot during the primary election of Sikyong and two North American Chithues?

You must have the following information at the time of voting during primary election:

- Full name of your candidate
- Their native origin (Phayul)
- Their present residence
- Their present or former occupation.

མིང་།	ལུང་ཚན།	ཕྱོད་གནས།	ལས་འགན།
Name	Place of Birth	Current Residence	Current Occupation

Q17. Can I cast my vote by post? No.

Q16. Will there be any assistance at the time of voting for people who cannot write?

A family member can assist with writing the details of candidate(s) at the time of voting. Secondly, the local election officers can also arrange volunteers for people who cannot write.

Q18. Is there any assistance for voters who are bed-ridden or unable to walk to the polling station?

No.

Q19. Can I write my candidate's name on a paper and bring that along with me to the polling station during the Election?

No. Every voter must know the candidate they are supporting. Secondly, we want to prevent the likelihood of individuals distributing the list to other voters at the polling station.

Q20. Can I campaign on the day of the elections?

No. All campaigning must stop two days before the election date. All campaigning for primary election must stop on or before midnight of October 15, 2015 local time, and midnight of March 17, 2016 for final election.

Q21. Is there a limit on election campaign expenses?

Yes. The Election Commission in Dharamsala in its notification dated June 10, 2015 has set the maximum amount for campaign expenses allowed for Sikyong at Indian Rupees 800,000.00 (Approx. \$12,500) and Indian Rupees 300,000.00 (Approx. \$4500) for individual Chithues.

Q22. What are campaign expense disclosure requirements?

As per the guideline issued by the Election Commission in Dharamsala, any candidate running for Sikyong or Chithue must disclose their campaign related income and expenses account to the office of local Election Commission before the announcement of election results.

Q23. What symbols or pictures are prohibited in the election campaign?

As per the guideline issued by the Election Commission in Dharamsala, candidates are not allowed to use the picture of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Official stamp of the Central Tibetan Administration, Tibetan National Flag and the Map of Tibet.

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Q24. Are any candidates running for Sikyong or Chithue in North America required to inform the Office of North American Election Commission?

Yes. As per the guideline issued by the Election Commission in Dharamsala, any candidate running for Sikyong or Chithue must inform the Office of North American Election Commission

Q25. Who will conduct the elections in North America?

The elections in North America will be conducted by the members of the North American Election Commission comprised of the North American Election Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and election members and observers affiliated with thirty Tibetan Associations in North America.

The Election Commission in Dharamsala appoints the Representative of the Office of Tibet and a senior staff as the North American Election Commissioner and his/her deputy. The local Tibetan communities elect local election officials. The President and Board of thirty Tibetan Associations will support the Commission.

Q26. Who cannot campaign or endorse candidates for Sikyong or North American Chithue?

The Office of Tibet, board members of the all-thirty Tibetan Association affiliated with the Office of Tibet, and local Election members and observers.

Q27. Who will count the election ballots in North America?

The election ballots in North America will be counted by the North American Election committee consisting of around twenty members from the thirty Tibetan Associations in North America. All ballots will be sent to the Office of North American Election Commission in Washington, DC for counting and tallying of official results.

Q28. What else do I need to keep in mind before supporting someone in the primary election?

As per guideline issued by the Election Commission in Dharamsala, one must obtain written approval from the candidate running for Sikyong or Chithue before publically endorsing a candidate.

Q29. Where should I report any complaints?

The Office of North American Election Commissioner:

Telephone: 212.213.5010 (Ext. 203)

Email: otdc@tibet.net,

Cell Phone: 240.708.1951

Q30. Who are the key North American Election Commission officials and where the office located?

Mr. Kaydor Aukatsang, North American Election Commissioner
Mr. Ngawang Yonten, North American Deputy EC

Office:

1228 17th Street NW, Washington DC 20036

Email: otdc@tibet.net

Cell Phone: 240.708.1951

Telephone: 212.213.5010 (ext: 203)

Fax: 703.349.7444