

**Statement of Protest Concerning the Rejection of our Tibet-Tongzhou Joint
Nomination to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register**

Fund for Archives of the Tongzhou Massacre

October 31, 2017

(1.) On October 30, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) released on its homepage a list of seventy-eight new items to be registered in the Memory of the World Register. Previously, the Fund for Archives of the Tongzhou Massacre (represented by Professor Fujioka Nobukatsu) and Gyari Bhutuk (former member of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile) had jointly nominated for registration a document collection entitled "Abuses of Human Rights – Tibet and Tongzhou" (Registration Code MoW2016-75). However, this nomination was not included on UNESCO's list, and it is thus apparent that UNESCO has decided to reject it for inclusion.

(2.) The process that led to this decision was as follows. On April 10, 2017, the Memory of the World Register Sub-Committee presented us with a letter pointing out two problems with our nomination. Firstly, our description of the location of the documents was incomplete, and secondly, any nomination submitted with the aim of reinterpreting the history of East Asia was against the mandate of the Memory of the World Programme. This letter constituted de facto rejection of our nomination, but we were told that any objections to the opinions of the sub-committee would be conveyed in full to the International Advisory Committee that is in charge of handing down the final verdict.

Therefore, we the nominators prepared a concrete rebuttal to expose the ways in which the sub-committee had completely misunderstood our intentions. We also improved the flawed descriptions of our twenty-seven submitted documents and revamped the whole text of our written application in order to change passages that had been criticized as being biased. We delivered these materials to UNESCO before the deadline of May 8. Nonetheless, by the time that UNESCO had announced its list of new registrations, we had still received no reply concerning the status of our revised nomination.

(3.) In Tibet, the victims of massacres exceeded 1.2 million people. Though these are the official figures released by the Tibetan Government in Exile, the Chinese government has never provided the international community with a fact-based rebuttal of this estimate. This is because the Chinese side also acknowledges that massacres did occur, even if it disputes some of the details, and the historical records of the atrocities are already publicly available to the international community. Therefore, having these records included in the Memory of the World Register is not an attack on China, but rather an attempt to have one of the unsavory events of human history officially registered. In the past, the UN itself has issued statements on the human rights problem in Tibet on three separate occasions.

The Tongzhou Massacre of 1937 may have been a much smaller incident in scale, but just like the atrocities perpetrated in Tibet, it was a barbaric violation of human rights and an affront to human decency. As two of the negative legacies of twentieth century human history, our memory of these terrible tragedies must not be consigned to oblivion by future generations of people.

We the nominators deeply regret that UNESCO failed to make the right decision on this occasion and accept our just submission to the Memory of the World Register.

(4.) Since UNESCO claims to be unable to register these historical facts, next time we will make sure to ask for an explanation as to why it was able to recognize the nomination submitted by China concerning the so-called "massacre" perpetrated by the Japanese Army in Nanking, even though its very existence has been called into doubt by experts.

This double standard by UNESCO is an unacceptable violation of the spirit of both the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is causing great damage to UNESCO's reputation as an international organization.

Recently, UNESCO has moved up implementation of its procedural reforms at the initiative of the Japanese government, and they are having some effect. UNESCO postponed its judgment on two nominations concerning the comfort women from starkly different perspectives, and recommended that both sides discuss the matter with one another. We do not deny that this represents a small improvement. If the Memory of the World Programme were to avoid politically contentious topics from now on, it could likely be a constructive step in the right direction.

Nevertheless, as long as the conditions that led to the Chinese government's politically motivated nomination of the factually dubious "Nanking Massacre" still exist, we intend to continue to assert the legitimacy of our claims in order to encourage UNESCO to adhere to its stated mandate.