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**Contact:** John Estrella 202 530 4900 [estrellaj@rfa.org](mailto:estrellaj@rfa.org)  
Rohit Mahajan 202 530 4976 [mahajanr@rfa.org](mailto:mahajanr@rfa.org)

## **Radio Free Asia Hosts First Interview with Exile Tibetan Prime Minister-Elect Lobsang Sangay**

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the declared winner of the Tibetan exile government elections, Lobsang Sangay, gave Radio Free Asia’s Tibetan service his first interview since being named prime minister-elect. During his interview at RFA’s headquarters in Washington, Sangay commented on the Dalai Lama’s recently announced intention to retire and hand political power to the next prime minister of the exile government.

“The Dalai Lama ... has decided to transfer political power to the Tibetan people by entrusting whom they have magnanimously chosen as the head of their exile government,” Sangay said during an interview that was webcast on RFA’s Tibetan service’s website. “We must respect the wishes and wisdom of His Holiness and find ways to implement his decision.”

Sangay, 43, is a law researcher at Harvard University. He won 55 percent of the vote in the March 20 election held around the world, defeating two candidates, Tenzin Namgyal Tethong and Tashi Wangdu. Sangay will relocate in May to Dharamsala, India, the seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile, to begin establishing his cabinet before the current office holder, Samdhong Rinpoche steps down on Aug. 14. Many expect Sangay will play a more visible role, as the Dalai Lama this year announced his intention of stepping down as political leader of the Tibetan exile community.

RFA’s Tibetan service provided extensive coverage of the exile elections beginning last year in May with broadcasts via Internet, satellite television, and shortwave radio on March 13 of a Kalon Tripa candidates forum. Tibetans living within China’s Tibetan regions also posed pre-recorded questions to the candidates during the forum.

The event was part of a series of seven town-hall style debates in Dharamsala and Bylakuppe, India, with general exile candidates, capping off eight months of interviews, profiles, and discussions about the race.

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