



DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (DIIR)

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Briefing Paper on Current Situation inside Tibet

Background: Since the military invasion of Tibet by the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1950, the Chinese government continues to systematically undermine and destroy the distinct cultural and national identity of the Tibetan people. Despite having undergone repression for more than 70 years, the Tibetan people have kept alive their non-violent struggle with indomitable courage and determination. Today, our greatest concern is the PRC government's renewed policy of "consolidating the sense of single Han national identity", aimed at extermination and Sinicization of the Tibetan (and other nationalities) culture, language, religion and way of life. The new measures in the field of culture, religion, and education, coupled with the unabated Chinese population transfer to Tibet, has not only the effect of overwhelming Tibet's distinct cultural and religious identity but also reduced the Tibetans to an insignificant minority in Tibet. All of these amount to a gradual process of cultural genocide.

The Tibetan plateau, which is the source of fresh water for millions of people in Asia, is threatened by the multiple impacts of climate change, China's detrimental developmental policies, forced relocation of Tibetan nomads and farmers, declaration of so-called natural reserves and national parks, and state engineered settlement of Chinese settlers in Tibet. There is an urgent need more than ever before to reverse the PRC government's misguided policy on Tibet. Otherwise, it will result in irreversible damage to the Tibetan identity, natural environment, and peace and stability in the subcontinent.

No amount of state repression, however brutal and devious, can ever silence the voice of freedom and justice. The unabated peaceful demonstrations and the desperate acts of self-immolations by the Tibetans over the past many decades are clear indications of a much larger problem. Unfortunately, the Chinese leadership still fails to understand the real aspirations of the people in Tibet and the extent of dissatisfaction among the Tibetan people.

The present state of affairs in Tibet does nothing to alleviate the grievances of the Tibetan people or to bring stability and harmony to the People's Republic of China. On our part, the Central Tibetan Administration remains committed to the process of dialogue to bring about a peaceful, negotiated, mutually beneficial, and lasting solution to the Sino-Tibet conflict.

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: unlawful or arbitrary killings, including extrajudicial killings by the government; disappearances; torture and cases of cruel, inhuman, and

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degrading treatment or punishment by the government; arbitrary arrest or detention; political prisoners; transnational repression against individuals located in another country; serious problems with the independence of the judiciary; arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy; serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media, including censorship; serious restrictions on internet freedom including site blocking; substantial interference with the freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association; severe restrictions on freedom of religion or belief, despite nominal constitutional protections voided by regulations restricting religious freedom and effectively placing Tibetan Buddhism under PRC government control; severe restrictions on freedom of movement; the inability of citizens to change their government peacefully through free and fair elections; restrictions on political participation; and serious acts of government corruption.

Key Message: Your support is needed because the world should stand up to China's aggressive policies and support the Tibetan people's nonviolent struggle for freedom and autonomy. In order to bring China to the negotiation table, the international community must use coordinated diplomatic measures, including Magnitsky sanctions and raising China's human rights violations in Tibet at the UN's Universal Periodic Review of China and other similar platforms. We need your support to ensure the government and lawmakers are aware of and support the right of Tibetans to self-determination as peoples of a nation that is illegally occupied.

The Central Tibetan Administration is committed to pursuing the Middle Way Policy to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict through dialogue. Therefore, it is imperative that the PRC government must immediately cease its misguided policy of eradicating the Tibetan identity and culture, which could cause deep wound and antagonism between Tibetan and Chinese people. Tibetans inside Tibet are urged to use legal means to provide timely suggestions to their local governments on their misguided and extreme policies and to ensure that the rights of Tibetans are protected under their constitution and the Regional National Autonomy Law. It is our hope that international governments will recognise Tibet's "true historical status" in order to serve as leverage for the Middle Way Policy and to provide inspiration to other democratic countries to strengthen the Tibetan people's spirit and determination to preserve their cultural identity and end the human rights violations of Tibetans inside Tibet.

Current Situation inside Tibet: Tibet's Freedom score for the first time ever dropped to zero in Freedom House's report Freedom in the World 2024, indicating China's ever-increasing repression and control over Tibetans and other nationalities under its illegal rule.

The Central Tibetan Administration is highly concerned by the brutal crackdown on peaceful Tibetan protesters in Derge, Tibet by the authorities of the People's Republic of China (PRC) resulting in mass arbitrary detention and injuries to many Tibetans. In Tibet, the PRC government continues to operate colonial boarding schools, separating nearly one million Tibetan children from their families and depriving them of the opportunity to learn their mother tongue, the Tibetan language, and get acquainted with Tibetan culture and traditions.

Religious Repression: Religion is fundamental to the Tibetan way of life, and Buddhism primarily defines the Tibetan national identity. The Tibetan people's devotion to His Holiness the Dalai Lama

and their religion is considered by the CCP as synonymous with separatism and a national security threat, which has resulted in a renewed crackdown on the Tibetan monastic community and freedom of religion. The demolition of renowned Tibetan Buddhist Institutions such as Larung Gar and Yachen Gar and the destruction of highly revered Buddhist statues and prayer wheels in Drakgo County a few years ago illustrate the extent to which the Chinese government has humiliated the integrity and meaning of Tibetan Buddhism to the Tibetan people.

As recently as December last year, China's State Administration for Religious Affairs promulgated the "Measures for the Administration of Religious Activity Sites" or the "Order Number 19," marking a significant escalation in the ongoing crackdown on religious freedom. Consequently, the measure further weakens the already diminishing opportunity for holy sites to freely exercise their religious traditions and ways of teaching by requiring them to obtain official permission for any religious activities that are intended to strengthen and build a strong sense of Chinese nationalism. Consequently, the Tibetan monastic community stands to be punished and prosecuted for violating the new measure, which in a nutshell obliges Buddhism as well as other religions to put the Chinese Communist Party in charge.

In Tibet, Buddhist leaders and eminent monks have been pressured into denouncing and exposing the Dalai Lama, as well as safeguarding the unity of the motherland.¹ A significant number of Tibetans have reportedly been arrested in recent years for possessing and displaying His Holiness the Dalai Lama's portrait.

There are a number of Tibetan monasteries that have significant murals and artifacts at risk of being completely destroyed in order to make way for the construction of Chinese hydroelectric dams. This indicates the complete disregard for Tibetan culture without the consent of Tibetans and without any plans to compensate them. The names of the monasteries include Yena, Wontoe, Khadho, Rabten, Gonsar and Tashi Monastery in Derge County as well as Atsok Gon Dechen Choekhorling Monastery in Dragkar county.

The Chinese government uses laws and regulations as a political tool to control and manipulate religion. The case in point is the Order no 5 also known as the "Measures on the management of the reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism" issued by the State Administration for Religious Affairs on 18 July 2007. This order deprives the Tibetans of their legitimate right to carry out their traditional Buddhist practices and to choose our own religious leaders. In the case of the reincarnation of the Panchen Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, despite repeated appeals from the United Nations' human rights experts and government officials, China has still not revealed the whereabouts of the 11th Panchen Lama.

Marginalization of Tibetan Language: Alarmingly, the ongoing forced assimilation of **nearly one million Tibetan children** in Chinese state-run colonial style boarding schools and promotion of

¹ *Ahead of Tibetan New Year, China urges monks to 'expose, denounce' Dalai Lama,*
<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/losar-visits-01312024135506.html>

Chinese language in a large number of kindergartens established across Tibet not only deny Tibetan children the right to learn and use their own language, they are also cut off from their way of thinking, custom and belief, which is giving rise to a generation affected by forced assimilation. On 14th December 2023 the European Parliament adopted with a large majority a resolution, strongly condemning the repressive forced assimilation of Tibetan children in Chinese state-run boarding schools in Tibet. The resolution calls on the Chinese government for the immediate abolishment of the boarding school system in Tibet, as highlighted by UN experts.

Chinese authorities have increased efforts to restrict Tibetan language usage over the past few years, clamping down on related blogs, schools, websites, social media platforms, and apps in order to push ahead with Tibet's assimilation policies. A well-respected Tibetan language blog with high readership, Luktsang Palyon (Eng: *Tibet Sheep*), was blocked on 2 April 2024 by authorities for alleged copyright infringement. The closure of these platforms is an issue of great concern and significant loss as they have been a constant source of content on Tibet. Other Tibetan-language online platforms have been blocked by authorities, such as *Talkmate* and *Bilibili*, which removed Tibetan languages, and *GangYang*, an app that allows short videos to be shared in Tibetan. The move was reportedly spurred by an order from the Chinese government to close the app as authorities increased their efforts to restrict Tibetans' use of their native language.

Derge Protest against Hydropower Station Project: The Chinese police arrested more than 1,000 Tibetans in February 2024, including monks from two local monasteries in Derge County in Kham Karze for protesting the construction of a dam that was intended to destroy six monasteries and force the relocation of two villages, according to verified news reports. Chinese authorities deployed specially trained armed police in Karze's Wonpotod village region to arrest more than 100 Tibetan monks from Wonpotod and Yena monasteries along with local residents, many of whom were beaten and injured, and later admitted to Derge County Hospital for medical treatment.

Amongst those arrested, names of the individuals known to exile media includes Rigzin, Thuphur, Dechen Dolma, Yangkyi, Tsedup, among others. Majority of Tibetans who have disappeared are reportedly university students with no information regarding their whereabouts or the names of some of them has been received to date. Chinese authorities have imposed a heavy surveillance policy in the area, restricting travel and conducting random searches in combination with deploying a large number of soldiers to monitor villages and markets. To date, Chinese authorities have arrested Tibetan Buddhist monastery administrator Tenzin Sangpo and village official Tenzin in February, under suspicion of leading protests against the construction of a dam and have kept them in a large detention facility in Derge County in Kham Tibet. According to the report, some of these detainees, including Sangpo and Tenzin, were severely beaten.

Custodial Torture and Deaths: Tsedon, a Tibetan girl from Tibet University in Lhasa was arrested by the police of Ritso Township on 26 December 2023. On 15 January 2024, her family members were informed of her death while officials refused to return her body to them, according to Tibet Times. The authorities repeatedly rejected the parents of the girl any information on the case of Tsedon. Later, the local police informed her family members that she had suddenly fallen and couldn't

stand back up, then admitted to the hospital. Considering Tsedon's generally healthy physical condition, it is evident that the Chinese police tortured and beat her to death. **Custodial deaths** of Chukdhar (in August 2022) and Geshe Phende Gyaltzen (in February 2023) highlights the extensive and systematic human rights abuses in Tibet with near-total impunity, including the **use of torture** and ill-treatment against Tibetans on a routine basis.

A significant number of Tibetan political prisoners are released from prison in poor health or on medical parole as a result of severe torture and a lack of medical care used by Chinese officials. Some have become permanently crippled and others struggle to survive before ultimately succumbing. In February 2024, Chinese authorities in Meruma township in Tibet's Ngaba's County released a Tibetan prisoner in terrible condition, in which one of his legs was crippled by torture while serving prison sentences, according to a *Tibet's Watch* report. Prior to his release, Ludup was reportedly subjected to an indefinite period of forced labor while serving his three-and-a-half year prison sentence at Deyang Prison in China's Sichuan Province. Despite being released from prison, Ludup continues to be regularly interrogated by the police and required to attend re-education classes. Currently, he faces difficulty accessing medical care in hospitals as he has lost his identity card and is under strict police surveillance preventing him from meeting family and friends.

Arbitrary Arrest and Detention: A news report appeared in January 2024 regarding the arrest and conviction of Lobsang Tashi, former head of prayer sessions at Ngaba Kirti Monastery, Tibet, by the Chinese police on 10 June 2021. According to the report, he was sentenced to three years imprisonment after a secret trial on trumped-up charges of “conducting general prayer sessions during the Covid-19 pandemic, not following orders of the concerned office, hindering to hoist the Chinese flag in Kirti monastery, and making offers for the deceased to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Kirti Rinpoche.”

On 4 January 2024, four Chinese police officials from Aruk Town and Dhola county arbitrarily arrested Taden on alleged charges of contacting and sharing information, including sending local documents and photographs, outside Tibet.² After he was taken into custody, his mother and relatives went there attempting to visit him but were denied any access to see him. Similarly, a Tibetan monk named Lobsang Thabkhey was arrested in June 2023 on trumped-up charges of “republishing books from the exiled Tibetan community” and contacting people outside Tibet, according to a report by *RFA*. In February 2024, news emerged that the whereabouts of the 54-year-old Thabkhey remained unknown.³

On 5 March 2024, a Tibetan named Phuntsok was arrested for allegedly having “leaked some confidential documents” outside Tibet and of exposing local Chinese authorities for failing to provide adequate welfare to the Tibetan population. His family's repeated request for authorities to share information about his whereabouts and chance to meet with him were denied.

² *Tibetan Arrested for Sharing Sensitive Material Outside of Borders*, <https://en.tibettimes.net/2024/02/02/a-tibetan-arrested-for-sending-information-to-the-outside/>

³ *Tibetan monk arrested for publishing books on Tibet from exiles*, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/arrest-02052024155945.html>

Chinese police in Tibet's Karze, arrested Tibetan writer Tenzin Khenrap in July 2023 for possessing a photo of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other books and documents on his mobile phone. His whereabouts have remained unknown since. The disappearance of Khenrap into Chinese custody has caused his mother, Phude, to experience deterioration in her mental health due to the lack of responses to her previous inquiries regarding her son. According to reports, she passed away on 17 February 2024.

Gendun Lhundup, a well-known Tibetan writer, remains unaccounted for three years after his arrest without any news of his trial or well-being. A former monk of Rongwo Monastery in Tibet's Amdo province, Gendun Lhundup, was detained following the release of his poem and years of public opposition to Chinese policies.

In March 2024, Chinese police arrested Pema, who is a teacher at Kirti Monastery's preliminary Buddhist study section, for shouting slogans opposing Chinese policies in Tibet and holding a portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama during his protest on Pawo Road, also known as Martyrs' Road, in Tibet's Ngaba.

Unlawful Official Measures and Persecutions: Tibetans in Derge were slapped with unlawful official orders of the PRC government as a result of their peaceful protest against the construction of a Hydropower plant on Tibet's river causing irreparable damage to the ecosystem as well as Tibetan culture and livelihood. On 7 March 2022, the People's Court, Investigation Bureau, Police and Judicial office of Derge County jointly announced a punishment order with a document of nine sections based on a code of public security measures, mass demonstration code, and writing complaint letters. According to the order, the punishment can be jail sentences and detention ranging from five to ten years. On the alleged charges of violating and disobeying the government order, many Tibetan protesters in Derge county were arrested and severely punished. This order has been reportedly implemented since the announcement.

Strict Surveillance on Tibetan School-going Children: In 2024, Chinese authorities are reiterating the restrictions on Tibetan children that were in place in 2021 as a means of strictly denying them access to private classes and religious activities during winter break. For instance, in the notice sent by Lhasa City authorities on 30 November 2023 announcing the winter breaks, parents were strictly instructed to ensure their children are free from religious influences, that children "voluntary distance themselves from places of worship" and that Tibetan children have access to supplementary classes and workshops only taught by government-authorized individuals and organizations and on subjects approved by the government.

Attack on Tibetan Language and Advocates: Over the past years, the Chinese authorities have strictly oppressed scholars, writers, and critics inside Tibet on different allegations. It is clear from the arrest of Tenzin Khenrab and the continued disappearance of Gendun Lhundup that Tibetan writers and poets have been persecuted by the Chinese government as a result of their advocacy of Tibetan language use. In March 2024, PRC government authorities in Ngaba County fired a highly-respected Tibetan teacher named Donyoe who had been teaching Tibetan language and history at a school in

Meruma for the past 15 years. His dismissal from the post, as well as his ban from further teaching, is a targeted attack on Tibetan language advocates and a deprivation of quality Tibetan education for Tibetan students.

Deprivation of Educational Rights and Job Opportunities: PRC government officials announced on 18 March 2024 a move promoting investment in Tibet by Chinese parents to gain access to high-quality universities in Tibet offering a quality education for their children. However, Tibetan students are deprived of educational and employment opportunities, worsening unemployment rates. Currently, the PRC government's policy of providing special conditions for Tibetan students to pursue higher education is at risk due to so-called development efforts aimed at favoring the rich Chinese migrants and their children.

Denial of Fair Public Trial: Gonpo Kyi, the sister of renowned Tibetan businessman Dorjee Tashi, has been on multiple occasions, peacefully protesting and appealing for a revision and fair trial for her brother Dorjee Tashi's false imprisonment. In April, the Chinese police physically assaulted Gonpo Kyi for the nth time, allegedly breaking her phone which, she claims contains evidence of past police brutality committed against her. Despite multiple torture and detention, Gonpo kyι continues to stage protests against Chinese court appealing for a retrial of Dorjee Tashi's court case, in accordance with the Chinese Constitution. Dorjee Tashi, a renowned Tibetan entrepreneur, was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2010 on fabricated charges of "loan fraud" after he provided covert support to Tibetan protesters in Tibet in 2008 and donations to the exile Tibetan community.

Recommendation: We urge the governments to form alliances with like-minded countries to pass similar Resolutions and Acts in line with the U.S. Government.

We call on the governments and international communities to urge PRC government to,

- To allow Tibetans to learn, use and develop Tibetan as their official language as guaranteed in the Chinese Constitution and Law on Regional National Autonomy and restore Tibetan as the medium of instruction in the offices across Tibet and Tibetan classes in schools, higher educational and vocational training centers.
- Immediately and unconditionally release these Tibetan protesters who have been wrongfully detained for exercising their fundamental rights and to ensure proper and timely medical treatment for the injured Tibetans;
- Immediately halt the construction of mega hydropower dams in Tibet without the consent of the local population and taking into consideration its ecological implications;
- Resume dialogue with the envoy/s of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to resolve the Sino-Tibetan conflict through the Middle-Way Approach without preconditions.
- Cease its policy of interference in the traditional reincarnation of Trulkus, Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism and suppression of the religious freedom of Tibetans.

- Reduce dam building on Tibet's trans border rivers considering the lives of downstream riparian countries.
- Reverse the policy of forced relocation of Tibetan nomads and include Tibetan participation in environmental stewardship by using their centuries old wisdom of having lived on the Tibetan Plateau.