

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022

## HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN TIBET



TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is a registered non-governmental human rights organisation established in January 1996 in Dharamsala (India) with the mission to protect the human rights of the Tibetan people in Tibet and promote the principles of democracy in the exile Tibetan community.

The centre is entirely run and staffed by Tibetans in exile. TCHRD’s work entails monitoring, research, translation and documentation of human rights violations in Tibet. The centre conducts regular, systematic investigation of human rights abuses in Tibet and brings out annual reports, thematic reports, testimonies of victims of human rights violations, electronic newsletters, and briefings on human rights issues that confront Tibetans inside Tibet. The centre engenders awareness on a wide range of issues relating to human rights and democracy through both grassroots and diplomatic means, using regional and international human rights mechanisms as well as community based awareness campaigns.

The TCHRD logo features the image of a white dove rising out of flames. The dove and olive branch are universal emblems of peace. The flames, drawn in traditional Tibetan style, represent the suffering of the Tibetan people, as well as the devastating and purifying force of truth.

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Cover Photo: Tibetans charged with spreading so-called rumours about the pandemic in Lhasa.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The human rights situation in Tibet in 2022 has been one of the worst in recent years, as Chinese authorities doubled down on repressive Covid measures to further erode human rights. For months, Tibetans and others in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) underwent tremendous suffering due to the ruthless enforcement of the ‘zero-Covid’ policy.

Hundreds of Tibetans were locked up in unsafe and ill-equipped quarantine facilities, and those who criticised the ‘zero-Covid’ policy on social media were threatened, fined, and detained. Far from adopting a human rights-based approach to Covid control and prevention, the Chinese authorities failed to effectively address the countless hardships borne by Tibetans during pandemic lockdowns.

New findings by international human rights organisations confirmed the unprecedented expansion of involuntary mass DNA collection in the PRC, covering millions of people in the Tibet Autonomous Region - including men, women, Buddhist monks, and children with no criminal record. Along with online surveillance, CCTV cameras, bugged homes, and checkpoints, this DNA collection drive is one of the many social control mechanisms aimed at suppressing dissent and bringing the entire population under state control.

Exiled Tibetan activists and dissidents with relatives in Tibet are particularly vulnerable to PRC’s multi-year campaign of transnational repression, which aims to silence criticism and expand the PRC’s control over emigrant and diaspora communities.

Through their laws, policies, and practices, the Chinese authorities unduly and disproportionately restrict and breach the right to privacy for Tibetans in Tibet. In doing so, they also deny them other fundamental human rights, such as freedom of expression.

Efforts are being made on an alarming scale to cut off all contacts between Tibetans living inside and outside Tibet, to ensure the rest of the world does not hear about the human rights situation in Tibet. Tibetans have been fired from their jobs, imprisoned, and tortured merely for staying in contact with relatives living abroad.

Tibetans were detained for having sent religious offerings to the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who is routinely targeted by Chinese government propaganda. Others were deported to undisclosed locations for possessing photos of His Holiness.

Many Tibetans are denied the right to manifest his or her religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. A growing number of Tibetan religious and cultural ceremonies and rituals have been banned. Official directives warned Tibetans against celebrating the birthday of the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan spiritual leaders living outside Tibet.

As new censorship regulations came into force, all references to religion on online platforms unapproved by the government were deemed illegal. Online spaces remained highly restricted, as evidenced by numerous violations of freedom of expression, opinion, and information documented in this report.

Tibetan culture and language are marginalised and related rights are denied under the forced cultural assimilation policy of the Chinese state. Numerous measures are put in place to establish absolute governmental control over the state education system. The imposition of Chinese medium education, government boarding schools, and crackdown on private schools, have resulted in grave human rights violations.

Despite facing extreme risks of enforced disappearance, torture, and death, three Tibetans died in self-immolation protests to mark the 10 March anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day. Chinese laws have systematically and cumulatively made it virtually impossible for Tibetans to peacefully assemble and associate. For Tibetans, self-immolation is the last resort to safely and freely communicate grievances and aspirations and draw much-needed attention to the dire situation in Tibet.

China’s policy of silencing dissident voices continues unabated, as Tibetan writers and intellectuals receive heavy prison sentences following lengthy pretrial detention. Tibetan political prisoners and other detainees died from torture injuries without having been charged, in pre- or post-trial detention, or after their release. Many remain held in unofficial detention facilities with no legal oversight that would ensure the prevention of torture and other grave human rights violations.

The Chinese legal system prioritises state security and the primacy of the Chinese Communist Party, and is therefore incapable of protecting human rights. Within a context of strengthening of state security services, the independence of the judiciary (to hold the executive accountable) and of the legal profession (to properly defend the rights of citizens) are diminished and threatened. Protections for individuals are severely undermined, creating a climate where summary and/or arbitrary executions can take place without any consequences, and thereby further undermining the basic rights of those perceived as a threat to Chinese state security.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This report was prepared by the research section of TCHRD. TCHRD’s trilingual research team, working in Tibetan, Chinese, and English, compiled and analysed information from a wide variety of sources on the human rights situation in Tibet 2022.

Relevant reports and articles published by international media and human rights organisations, as well as official Chinese media reports and social media discourse, formed the bulk of secondary research. TCHRD’s legal researcher provided the legal analysis based on international human rights law and the Chinese legal system for this report.

To ensure accuracy and reliability, TCHRD researchers conducted mandatory verification with at least two sources for every information. The originally sourced information by TCHRD has been subjected to similar verification procedures.

Due to the risks involved, the identities of sources and informants who contributed to this report cannot be made public. The increased risks faced by Tibetans have made it impossible to collect comprehensive information on many cases documented in this report.

China’s ever-expanding censorship and surveillance regime obligates all internet service companies, both domestic and foreign, to remove and ban so-called illegal contents and provide the government direct access to user communication data. The Cyber Security Law (2017), for instance, requires internet companies to collect and verify users’ identities whenever they use major web sites or services and to provide support and assistance to security agencies during criminal investigations.

TCHRD recognises those with the courage to share their stories, and those who risk their lives transmitting information in pursuit of human rights in Tibet.

All research work was guided by the research ethics principle of “Do no harm” prioritising the privacy and security of sources and informants as well as their loved ones.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

**To the Chinese Government**

- 1. Guarantee the right to self-determination and enforce policies that enable Tibetans to exercise genuine autonomy as provided for in the PRC’s Constitution and Law on Regional National Autonomy.
- 2. End the forced cultural assimilation or sinicization policy to protect the individual and collective rights of the Tibetan people.
- 3. Create concrete conditions to enable Tibetans to exercise the rights and freedoms on education and language rights enshrined in international treaties and conventions that PRC ratified.
- 4. End ‘zero-Covid’ policy and related restrictions especially control over freedom of movement, liberty and expression in Tibet.
- 5. Require consent to be obtained before collecting biometric data, which includes DNA and blood sampling, voice recordings, photographs, or any form of identifiable data.
- 6. Introduce legislation to protect the right to privacy as a fundamental human right, including explicit mention and acknowledgement of the right to privacy in future.
- 7. Allow Tibetans to fully exercise their human rights, to preserve their cultural identity, and to ensure their participation in decision-making.
- 8. Incorporate and implement prisoner rights provisions in the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners to prevent torture and punish torturers.
- 9. Release all Tibetans arbitrarily imprisoned in official and unofficial detention centres and prisons.
- 10. Repeal the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Law that allow de facto incommunicado detention at a designated location while under residential surveillance.
- 11. Review, repeal and amend legislation and policy that go beyond the reasonable requirements of state security prevention of crime in breach of human rights.
- 12. Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
- 13. Invite the Special Rapporteur on Torture for a follow up visit to assess the situation of prisoners and detainees in Tibet.

**To the International Community**

- 1. Cease creating new economic contracts with PRC until the Chinese government addresses the dire human rights situation in Tibet
- 2. Refuse, both individually and collectively, to invest in areas in PRC where human rights violations are being committed in Tibet

- 3. Pressure China to fulfil its human rights obligations pursuant to its ratification of major human rights treaties and conventions
- 4. Protect and guarantee the human rights of Tibetan refugees and asylum seekers fleeing Chinese persecution
- 5. Demand accountability from the Chinese government for its human rights violations by not supporting China-sponsored resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council and all other multilateral platforms
- 6. Pressure China to extend invitations to UN human rights experts on freedom of religion, expression, cultural rights, torture, enforced disappearance, privacy, and assembly all of whom have made repeated visit requests to visit PRC
- 7. Support the June 2020 call by 50 UN human rights experts to act collectively and decisively to ensure China respects human rights and abides by its international obligations
- 8. Impose targeted sanctions and travel ban on individuals responsible for human rights crimes in Tibet
- 9. Provide asylum and support to Tibetans and others from the PRC seeking refuge in foreign countries



## 4. COVID CRISIS

### 4.1. ZERO-COVID POLICY

China’s ‘zero-Covid’ policy was implemented with authoritarian lockdowns and entailed the further deterioration of human rights in Tibet. The policy went into force with the announcement on 8 August that there were 22 Covid-positive cases in the cities of Lhasa (Ch: Lasa) and Ngari (Ch: Ali), Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).<sup>1</sup> Most of these cases had been traced back to Shigatse (Ch: Xigaze) city, where the infections were detected on 4 and 5 August.



Lhasa City during lockdown in August 2022.

A day later, on 9 August, the Chinese authorities issued another directive forbidding anyone from posting or sharing information about the Covid situation in the TAR. The four-point directive called for “striking hard” on those “spreading rumours about the pandemic”, in addition to inviting the public to report anyone breaching laws and regulations on cybersecurity and online information sharing. The directive emphasised the importance of “creating a clean cybersphere to safeguard social stability” in the general aim of mitigating the pandemic. On the same day, strict lockdowns were imposed in Shigatse, Lhasa, and Ngari, while local authorities in Nyingtri, Lhoka, Chamdo, and Nagchu cities also reported positive cases.

<sup>1</sup> “China’s Zero-Covid Policy Must Be Compatible with Human Rights.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 18 Sept. 2022, [tchrd.org/chinas-zero-covid-policy-must-be-compatible-with-human-rights/](https://tchrd.org/chinas-zero-covid-policy-must-be-compatible-with-human-rights/).

The same day, strict lockdowns were imposed in Shigatse, Lhasa and Ngari, while local authorities in Nyingtri, Lhoka, Chamdo, Nagchu cities also reported positive cases. Major religious activities in monasteries in and near Lhasa during the ‘Losar’ Tibetan New Year, were [banned](#) due to Covid concerns.<sup>2</sup> A 22 February notice issued by Lhasa’s Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau ordered Tibetans to remain homebound and avoid gatherings during Losar, which began on 3 March and fell in the same month of the sensitive 10 March anniversary in Tibet.

China’s implementation of the ‘zero-Covid’ policy proved [devastating](#) for Tibet, East Turkestan/Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia and other so-called ethnic minority areas, where the policy has clearly served to double down on repression.<sup>3</sup> Accounts of Tibetans quarantined in government facilities revealed the extent to which the Chinese government held healthy individuals in custody and subjected many to unsafe conditions, raising concerns that the quarantine facilities violated human rights, especially the right to liberty and security and freedom from arbitrary detention.

Human rights groups have expressed serious concern over the situation in China due to the iron-clad enforcement of ‘zero-Covid’ policy, which not only [disrupted](#) the economy and the social fabric, but also violated human rights.<sup>4</sup>

The new Covid measures issued by China on 11 November, containing 20 measures to refine its policy approach on ‘zero Covid’ policy, after persistent protests by Chinese people, however, was [not intended](#) for “relaxation of prevention and control, nor is it a call to let go or adopt the ‘lying flat’ approach”.<sup>5</sup>

Barriers in accessing emergency care and exercising basic human rights during strict lockdowns caused avoidable deaths, even as the government used Covid health protocols as a tool of surveillance and control.

On 30 November, Tibetan businessman and philanthropist Nangchen Tashi and his family members were taken to a quarantine facility even in the absence of any symptoms. In quarantine, his two-year old grandchild contracted the virus and soon [died](#) because no timely and proper medical care was provided. Speaking to an online group, Tashi criticised the local officials responsible for enforcing the ‘zero-Covid’ policy.

<sup>2</sup> “China Bans New Year Religious Gatherings in Tibetan Capital Lhasa.” Radio Free Asia, 4 Mar. 2022, [www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/bans-03042022133837.html](https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/bans-03042022133837.html).

<sup>3</sup> “Human Rights Day: Call for China to Respect Human Rights during Covid Pandemic.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 10 Dec. 2022, [tchrd.org/human-rights-day-call-for-china-to-respect-human-rights-during-covid-pandemic/](https://tchrd.org/human-rights-day-call-for-china-to-respect-human-rights-during-covid-pandemic/).

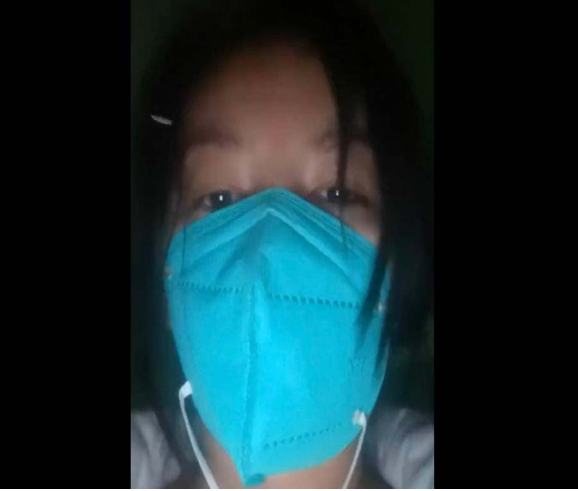
<sup>4</sup> “China: End Ideological “Zero COVID” and Put Human Life and Dignity First.” Chinese Human Rights Defenders, 16 Nov. 2022, [www.nchrd.org/2022/11/china-end-ideological-zero-covid-and-put-human-life-and-dignity-first/](https://www.nchrd.org/2022/11/china-end-ideological-zero-covid-and-put-human-life-and-dignity-first/).

<sup>5</sup> “China: End Ideological “Zero COVID” and Put Human Life and Dignity First.” Chinese Human Rights Defenders, 16 Nov. 2022, [www.nchrd.org/2022/11/china-end-ideological-zero-covid-and-put-human-life-and-dignity-first/](https://www.nchrd.org/2022/11/china-end-ideological-zero-covid-and-put-human-life-and-dignity-first/).

“The head of the Covid control and prevention centre, Nyima Tashi, and the city’s mayor, as well as many other Chinese leaders, are only concerned about their positions and engage in ethnic discrimination. It is futile to talk to them about people’s sufferings. They should stop intimidating the masses and engaging in discriminatory practices.”



Screengrab of Nangchen Tashi’s voice message on WeChat.



Nangchen Tashi’s daughter, Yangzom.

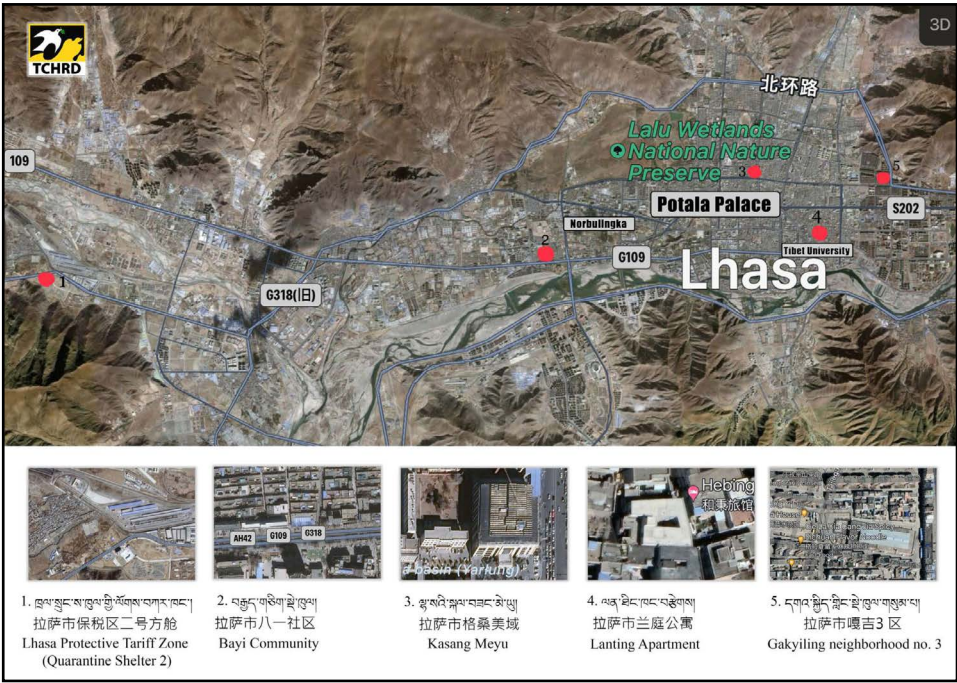
4.2. AUTHORITARIAN LOCKDOWNS

Even before Covid, Tibet had consistently ranked as one of the most repressed countries in the world. The authoritarian Covid restrictions only contributed to further deterioration of human rights conditions in Tibet.

Chinese authorities enforced one of the most severe lockdowns flouting with impunity the principles of transparency, integrity and accountability. The state’s ‘zero-Covid’ goal took precedence over hardships faced by the people. No timely and proper assistance and support were provided to the affected individuals and families in overcoming challenges of Covid lockdowns.

On 27 September, some 42937 people were found in “[centralized isolation and observation](#)” (集中隔离观察, jizhong geli guancha) throughout the TAR, according to official figures.<sup>6</sup> By that time, 97213 others had been in a government shelter in TAR since the virus was detected in early August. Studies further indicated that between early August and late September, some 70000 people in Lhasa, about 15 percent of the 480000 residents of the Lhasa metropolitan area had been or were still in government shelters.<sup>7</sup>

6 Barnett, Robert. “In Tibet, Officials’ Pursuit of Zero-COVID Sent Tens of Thousands into Mass ‘Isolation’ Facilities.” China File, 1 Nov. 2022, [www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/tibet-officials-pursuit-of-zero-covid-sent-tens-of-thousands-mass](http://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/tibet-officials-pursuit-of-zero-covid-sent-tens-of-thousands-mass).  
7 “In Tibet, Officials’ Pursuit of Zero-COVID Sent Tens of Thousands into Mass ‘Isolation’ Facilities.” China File, 1 Nov. 2022, [www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/tibet-officials-pursuit-of-zero-covid-sent-tens-of-thousands-mass](http://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/tibet-officials-pursuit-of-zero-covid-sent-tens-of-thousands-mass).



Map showing the locations of five Tibetans who died of suicide between 23 September to 25 September with red dots marking the sites of suicides.



A screengrab from a video showing a Tibetan youth jumping from a building in Lhasa.

Between 23 and 25 September, at least five known Tibetans committed suicide in Lhasa city. Videos of some of them jumping to death from atop buildings were shared online. Videos shared on Weibo and WeChat showed an unidentified person jumping to death on 23 September in Gakyiling neighbourhood 3 in Lhasa city. Other deaths were also reported on 24 and 25 September.



In the initial period of lockdown in TAR, a large number of Tibetans from Kham and Amdo areas outside TAR were made to leave for their respective hometowns and [quarantined](#) in government custody for a minimum of one week on their arrival.<sup>8</sup> Soepa, who returned from Lhasa to Sershul (Ch: Shiqu) County, was quarantined on arrival on 15 August at a guesthouse where he was made to stay for minimum one week even after testing negative in multiple tests in three successive days. He learned that other Chinese workers made to leave Lhasa were released from quarantine the same day. There was no electricity or water in this quarantine facility. Soepa and others were given phone numbers to order food from but the numbers didn't work leaving them without food and water for long periods until relatives helped arrange for food from home.

The dismal [conditions](#) in the state-built quarantine shelters in Lhasa, Shigatse and Chamdo cities, as seen in a viral video posted by a woman on 12 September about a government shelter in Lhasa, patients were offered spoiled food with no caretakers in sight.<sup>9</sup> Conditions there were enough to put the health of many patients including the elderly and children at risk.



Vice Mayor of Lhasa, Mr. Dradul apologises for the mishandling of the ‘zero-Covid’ policy.

In the backdrop of popular dissent against the ‘zero-Covid’ policy, on 17 September, the vice mayor of Lhasa Municipality Mr Dradul [bowed](#) in front of the cameras, apologising for the government’s failure

8 “Tibetans Subjected to Discrimination and Detention amid Massive Protests against China’S Zero-Covid Policy.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 29 Nov. 2022, [tchrd.org/tibetans-subjected-to-discrimination-and-detention-amid-massive-protests-against-chinas-zero-covid-policy/](http://tchrd.org/tibetans-subjected-to-discrimination-and-detention-amid-massive-protests-against-chinas-zero-covid-policy/).

9 “China’s Zero-Covid Policy Must Be Compatible with Human Rights.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 18 Sept. 2022, [tchrd.org/chinas-zero-covid-policy-must-be-compatible-with-human-rights/](http://tchrd.org/chinas-zero-covid-policy-must-be-compatible-with-human-rights/).

to meet the needs of the masses during the lockdown.<sup>10</sup> This choreographed public apology was quickly followed by the Lhasa Public Security Police issuing the following directive on 18 September warning netizens against posting Covid-related “rumours” or face prosecution:

“Since the outbreak of the epidemic, the majority of Lhasa citizens have consciously abided by the relevant laws and regulations and epidemic prevention measures, actively cooperated with the epidemic prevention personnel, and jointly maintained the good social and public order and epidemic prevention and control work in our city. However, there are also people who ignore and violate relevant laws and regulations, fabricate and spread false information about the epidemic on the Internet, and cause negative social impact ... An orderly network environment and social order contribute to the fight against the epidemic with practical actions. For those who maliciously create, spread rumours, and incite illegal gatherings to cause trouble, the public security organs will investigate and punish them in accordance with the law!”

4.3. DISSENTING NETIZENS

In a rare show of defiance, netizens in PRC actively shared information on Chinese cyberspace countering official accounts of successful implementation of ‘zero-Covid’ policy. Many Tibetans have used online platforms to openly criticise the Chinese government’s mismanagement of pandemic lockdowns, which resulted in great suffering and hardships for the local people.



A screengrab from a viral TikTok video posted on 15 September.

Netizens broke their silence on Covid lockdown measures in early September when Tibetans [posted](#) short but critical videos on Douyin, China’s version of TikTok, and Weibo reflecting the anxieties and anger against Covid lockdown.<sup>11</sup> Tibetans openly showed their faces on camera and criticised the Chinese government’s gross mismanagement of Covid lockdowns. In a 15 September [video](#), a Tibetan appeals to the Chinese government: “So, on behalf of the people, I appeal to the higher authorities to properly manage

10 “Tibetans Subjected to Discrimination and Detention amid Massive Protests against China’s Zero-Covid Policy.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 29 Nov. 2022, [tchrd.org/tibetans-subjected-to-discrimination-and-detention-amid-massive-protests-against-chinas-zero-covid-policy/](http://tchrd.org/tibetans-subjected-to-discrimination-and-detention-amid-massive-protests-against-chinas-zero-covid-policy/).

11 Barnett, Robert . “In Tibet, Officials’ Pursuit of Zero-COVID Sent Tens of Thousands into Mass ‘Isolation’ Facilities.” *China File*, 1 Nov. 2022, [www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/tibet-officials-pursuit-of-zero-covid-sent-tens-of-thousands-mass](http://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/tibet-officials-pursuit-of-zero-covid-sent-tens-of-thousands-mass).



this pandemic as soon as possible. It is better to die than live like this. Execute us, whatever, being dead is better.”<sup>12</sup>

As discontent grew online, official Chinese media sources warned netizens to “mind [their] typing thumbs lest they get into trouble”. Other government reports repeatedly issued threats that those “spreading rumours during pandemic” will be prosecuted for the crimes of “inciting separatism”, “destroying ethnic unity”, “destroying national unity” and “inciting state subversion”.

4.4. CENSORSHIP AND DETENTION

Tibetans expressing their discontent and criticism on social media have been detained, interrogated and forced to issue apologies for creating “rumour” and “fake news” in videos shot and published by the Chinese government. Social media posts critical of government policy were censored and removed.



.Tibetan and Chinese workers protest against prolonged pandemic lockdown in the Chakrong neighbourhood of Lhasa City on 26 October. Photo: Radio Free Asia

Following the protest by Tibetan and Chinese workers on 26 October against prolonged pandemic lockdown in Chakrong neighbourhood in Lhasa City, 200 protesters were detained and held in a building owned by the government housing development authority. Among the detained were 47 Tibetans, mostly workers from other parts of Tibet.

12 “China’s Zero-Covid Policy Must Be Compatible with Human Rights.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 18 Sept. 2022, tchrd.org/chinas-zero-covid-policy-must-be-compatible-with-human-rights/.

Tibetan protesters were held for 14 days in one-room cells not allowed to contact fellow detainees. Each was fed only once a day and put to interrogation sessions where they were repeatedly asked to divulge information about protest leaders, their motives and planning process.

Earlier on 14 August, Gontse, 40, a primary school teacher in Mewa village in Khyungchu County, Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture was [detained](#) for sharing videos and other images of the Chinese government’s inhumane treatment of people in Lhasa during the lockdown.<sup>13</sup>

On 14 September, seven Tibetans including Rinchen Dhondup, hailing from Shentsa County (Nagchu City), Lhasa, Chumarleb County (Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture) were detained for sharing [posts](#) on social media about the government’s handling of ‘zero-Covid’ policy.<sup>14</sup> They were severely interrogated for five days about the Covid related contents at Nagchu County security office and were also given political education.

The surge in popular dissent online in September coincided with the mass deletion of hundreds of posts on the [Tibet Epidemic Prevention and Control](#) (西藏疫情防控) thread from Lhasa from search results.<sup>15</sup> The Covid posts about Lhasa kept being taken down from the trending hashtags section. At one point, the daily hits on the Tibet thread reached 115 million only to reduce to almost zero within four days.

The extensive violations of human rights during Covid lockdown in Tibet further [enabled](#) China’s digital surveillance police state to engage in massive censorship and surveillance via the Great Firewall.<sup>16</sup> A great number of people from all ages and backgrounds including children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, those with preexisting life-threatening medical conditions, and migrant labourers, were left vulnerable and unprotected, under any pandemic measures.

13 “Tibetan Teacher Arrested for Online COVID Posts.” Radio Free Asia, 27 Sept. 2022, www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/posts-09272022134553.html.  
14 “Seven Tibetans Including Rinchen Dhondup Detained.” Tibet Times, 16 Sept. 2022, tibettimes.net/2022/09/16/222112/.  
15 Barnett, Robert . “In Tibet, Officials’ Pursuit of Zero-COVID Sent Tens of Thousands into Mass ‘Isolation’ Facilities.” China File, 1 Nov. 2022, www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/tibet-officials-pursuit-of-zero-covid-sent-tens-of-thousands-mass.  
16 “China: End Censorship, Prioritize Human Rights over Politicized “Zero-COVID”” Chinese Human Rights Defenders, 13 Apr. 2022, www.nchrd.org/2022/04/china-end-censorship-prioritize-human-rights-over-politicized-zero-covid/.

# 5. SURVEILLANCE AND PRIVACY

## 5.1. INVOLUNTARY MASS DNA COLLECTION

Large-scale DNA collection is not new in the PRC. Since the early 2000s, the Ministry of Public Security has been running the world’s [largest](#) forensic DNA database, based on an extensive DNA collection process carried out by the Chinese police.<sup>17</sup> This nation-wide campaign has intensified since the early 2010s, including a program [launched](#) in 2017 to collect the DNA of an estimated 8.1 to 26.4 percent of all males in the country.<sup>18</sup> In 2018, there were 68 million DNA samples on this system, ostensibly collected as part of criminal or forensic investigations.

What makes the recent surge in [mass DNA collection](#) in Tibet particularly alarming is the sheer scale and extent of the affected population, which includes men, women, children, and Buddhist monks uninvolved in any ongoing criminal investigation.<sup>19</sup> Before this, the main targets were those considered ‘troublemakers’ - such as migrants, former prisoners, criminal suspects, and other social groups categorised as “focus personnel” by security agencies.



Police collecting DNA samples from residents of Drito (Ch: Zidoi) County in Yushu Municipality, Qinghai Province in September 2021. Photo: Human Rights Watch

In September, two major studies revealed that mass DNA collection in TAR covered all population groups without any criminal background. On 5 September, a major [report](#) by Human Rights Watch, indicated that

17 “China’s Government Is Mass-collecting DNA from Tibetans.” The Economist, 13 Sept. 2022, [www.economist.com/china/2022/09/13/chinas-government-is-mass-collecting-dna-from-tibetans?gclid=Cj0KCQiAw8OeBhCeARIsAGx-WtUxVGHx0MooLjXvZqIeS9bM3pcYvNWbaiUVhGZTiXQH2Xx43M3HXrMQaAvLoEALw\\_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds](#).

18 Dirks, Emile, and James Leibold . Genomic Surveillance: Inside China’s DNA Dragnet. Australian Strategic Policy Institute, International Cyber Policy Centre, 2020, [https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ad-aspi/2020-06/Genomic%20surveillance\\_1.pdf?QhPFyrNVaSjvblmFT24HRXSuHyRfhpmI=](#).

19 Dirks, Emile. “Mass DNA Collection in the Tibet Autonomous Region from 2016–2022.” The Citizen Lab, 13 Sept. 2022,[www.citizenlab.ca/2022/09/mass-dna-collection-in-the-tibet-autonomous-region/](#).

mass DNA collection drives were being conducted in all seven prefectures or municipalities in the TAR. In January 2022, mass DNA collection drives known as “Great One-by-one Inspection, Great Investigation and Great Mediation” (da zou fang 大走访、da diao yan 大调研、da hua jie 大化解) was launched to “strengthen the grass-roots social governance system” in villages in TAR.

On 13 September, the Citizen Lab provided an analysis of 100 publicly available sources on mass DNA collection program in TAR and [concluded](#) that between June 2016 and July 2022, police may have collected between roughly 919,282 and 1,206,962 DNA samples, representing between one quarter (25.1%) and one third (32.9%) of TAR’s total population (3.66 million).<sup>20</sup>

All independent studies have concluded that mass DNA collection in TAR is coercive and involuntary. In the case of Tibet, an entire region or population are made to submit DNA samples without choice, which makes such grave human rights violations unjustifiable.

## 5.2. TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

Transnational repression is gaining more attention in recent years even as Chinese authorities continue to engage in extraterritorial exercise of power in silencing and abducting human rights defenders, asylum seekers, activists, and critics of the Chinese Communist Party living in foreign countries. This year, there was a marked increase in both governmental and non-governmental actors in the international community drawing the focus on the need to promote accountability for transnational repression and other human rights violations committed by the Chinese government.

In its latest annual report released in November, the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC), an agency that advises the US Congress on human rights and rule of law developments in China, noted that the Chinese government has a [multi-year](#) campaign of transnational repression against critics, Uyghurs, and others to stifle criticism and enhance control over emigrant and diaspora communities.<sup>21</sup> The report showed an unprecedented level of attention from the CECC to transnational repression providing further evidence to its growing threat to human rights and democracy.

In its statement to the CECC’s hearing on China’s hearing on Transnational Repression in June, the US-based NGO Freedom House concluded that the Chinese government was operating the “world’s most sophisticated, comprehensive, and far-reaching campaign of transnational repression”, as part of its broader agenda to spread its influence internationally.

The same month, the Freedom House published a major [report](#) highlighting the threats posed by transnational repression to human rights and democratic values globally and the need to introduce effective means to

20 Dirks, Emile. “Mass DNA Collection in the Tibet Autonomous Region from 2016–2022.” *The Citizen Lab*, 13 Sept. 2022, [www.citizenlab.ca/2022/09/mass-dna-collection-in-the-tibet-autonomous-region/](#).

21 Han, Bochen . “China’s Efforts in US and Elsewhere to Reach and Silence Critics Merit Greater Attention: US Panel.” South China Morning Post, 17 Nov. 2022, [www.scmp.com/news/china/article/3199899/chinas-efforts-us-and-elsewhere-reach-and-silence-critics-merit-greater-attention-us-panel](#).



protect people vulnerable to transnational repression.<sup>22</sup> Freedom House’s database ranked China as the top offender perpetrating the most incidents of physical transnational repression.

The report called China’s use of transnational repression a threat to people living in at least 36 countries, including current and former pro-democracy activists, Falun Gong practitioners, Tibetans, Mongolians, Hong Kongers, Uyghurs, human rights defenders, journalists, and others who criticise the Chinese Communist Party.

On 21 March, the US State Department had [announced](#) visa restrictions on Chinese officials committing human rights violations and transnational repression against “members of ethnic and religious minority groups, including those who seek safety abroad, and U.S. citizens, who speak out on behalf of these vulnerable populations.”

The State Department reaffirmed its commitment “to use all diplomatic and economic measures to promote accountability” against China’s acts of transnational repression.<sup>23</sup>

On 7 July, a U.S. federal grand jury charged five men for committing “[crimes](#) pertaining to a transnational repression scheme orchestrated on behalf of [China]”.<sup>24</sup> The defendants’ crimes consisted of targeting U.S. residents of Chinese nationalities who shared critical views on the Chinese government, and harassing and planting surveillance equipment on critics of the Chinese government.

That two of the five defendants worked in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security exposed the alarming reach and infiltration of Chinese government agents in foreign governments and institutions. It also highlighted the need for greater efforts to protect the safety and well-being of survivors of human rights violations at the hands of the Chinese government now seeking refuge in foreign countries.

Earlier in February, a Canadian court had issued a precedent-setting [ruling](#) that will have enduring ramifications on the future trajectory of transnational repression perpetrated by China.<sup>25</sup> The ruling rejected permanent residency to a Chinese couple because the husband had worked for 20 years for Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (OCAO), controlled by the United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party, in China. The term “Overseas Chinese” is used by the Chinese government to refer to ethnic Chinese people living in foreign countries, including Tibetans.

22 Gorokhovskaia, Yana , and Isabel Linzer. “Defending Democracy in Exile: Policy Responses to Transnational Repression.” *Freedom House*, Jun. 2022, [freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/Complete\\_TransnationalRepressionReport2022\\_NEW\\_0.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/Complete_TransnationalRepressionReport2022_NEW_0.pdf).

23 Blinken, Antony J. “Promoting Accountability for Transnational Repression Committed by People’S Republic of China (PRC) Officials.” U.S Department of State, 21 Mar. 2022, [www.state.gov/promoting-accountability-for-transnational-repression-committed-by-peoples-republic-of-china-prc-officials/](https://www.state.gov/promoting-accountability-for-transnational-repression-committed-by-peoples-republic-of-china-prc-officials/).

24 Gorokhovskaia, Yana, and Angeli Datt. “How to Resist China’s Campaign of Transnational Repression.” *The Diplomat*, 21 Jul. 2022, [thediplomat.com/2022/07/how-to-resist-chinas-campaign-of-transnational-repression/](https://thediplomat.com/2022/07/how-to-resist-chinas-campaign-of-transnational-repression/).

25 Blackwell, Tom. “Chinese Government Agency That Works with Canadians Involved in Espionage, Federal Court Affirms.” *National Post*, 23 Feb. 2022, [nationalpost.com/news/canada/chinese-government-agency-that-works-with-canadians-is-involved-in-espionage-federal-court-affirms](https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/chinese-government-agency-that-works-with-canadians-is-involved-in-espionage-federal-court-affirms).

Transnational repression against Tibetans, Uyghurs, and other communities has been practised for decades. But since 2014, transnational repression campaigns have multiplied, as “an [international extension](#) of emergent repressive campaigns within the PRC”. The extreme centralisation of Chinese president Xi Jinping’s power is [evident](#) in its aggressive foreign policy, which includes transnational repression.<sup>26</sup>

Tibetans living in exile, especially those who still have family members back in Tibet, live in a constant state of fear and uncertainty, vulnerable to Chinese pressure and silencing tactics. Many fear Chinese government reprisals against their family members, [forcing](#) some to quit their professions in exile as journalists and writers.<sup>27</sup>

In November, three Tibet groups in the Netherlands - Tibetan Community in the Netherlands, Tibet Support Group Netherlands and International Campaign for Tibet Europe - [wrote](#) to Prime Minister Mark Rutte about the marked rise in Tibetans living in the Netherlands suffering intimidation at the hands of Chinese authorities.<sup>28</sup> The letter detailed the experiences of Dutch citizens of Tibetan heritage as well as other Tibetan residents in the country receiving phone calls from unknown individuals identifying themselves as representatives of the Chinese embassy.

5.3. RIGHT TO PRIVACY

The right to privacy serves as a key to the full enjoyment and exercise of human rights online and offline. It enables the enjoyment of various other rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly, access and enjoyment of political, economic, social and cultural life.

Article 12 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)<sup>29</sup> and Article 17 of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#)<sup>30</sup> provide that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation. International human rights law further requires that governments do not interfere with the right to privacy using unlawful, unnecessary, discriminatory and disproportionate means such as targeting certain ethnic groups.

26 “Freedom House Releases First Ever Report on Transnational Repression.” *Harriman Institute*, 8 Feb. 2021, [www.harriman.columbia.edu/freedom-house-releases-first-ever-report-on-transnational-repression/#:~:text=February%208%2C%202021%20Freedom%20House%20released%2C%20%E2%80%9COut%20of,of%20exiles%20and%20diasporas%20by%20their%20origin%20states](https://www.harriman.columbia.edu/freedom-house-releases-first-ever-report-on-transnational-repression/#:~:text=February%208%2C%202021%20Freedom%20House%20released%2C%20%E2%80%9COut%20of,of%20exiles%20and%20diasporas%20by%20their%20origin%20states).

27 Hellerstein, Erica . “Why Targeting Ethnic Minority Journalists Is Central to China’S Crackdown on the Press.” *Coda Story*, 17 Feb. 2022, [www.codastory.com/authoritarian-tech/tibet-uyghur-writers/](https://www.codastory.com/authoritarian-tech/tibet-uyghur-writers/).

28 “Tibet Groups Write to Dutch PM on Chinese Intimidation of Tibetans.” *International Campaign for Tibet*, 1 Nov. 2022, [savetibet.org/tibet-groups-write-to-dutch-pm-on-chinese-intimidation-of-tibetans/](https://savetibet.org/tibet-groups-write-to-dutch-pm-on-chinese-intimidation-of-tibetans/).

29 United Nations General Assembly. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*. New York: United Nations General Assembly, 1948.

30 United Nations (General Assembly). “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.” *Treaty Series*, vol. 999, Dec. 1966, p. 171.



In her report to the UN General Assembly in July 2022, the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy, Ana Brian Nougères underlined the overriding importance of data collection in all processing activities throughout the life cycle of personal data. Because data collection as the first processing activity, if done illegally, will affect the legality of the other processing activities that arise from it.<sup>31</sup>

The Special Rapporteur’s report further highlighted the close links between legality and consent in the processing of personal data, in addition to shedding light on the international standards related to the protection of personal data of vulnerable groups such as children and adolescents.

In 2021, the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights in its report to the Human Rights Council, had called on the member-states to adopt a human rights-based approach in its application of new technologies and artificial intelligence so that the core human rights principles, including equality and non-discrimination, participation and accountability are respected and guaranteed.<sup>32</sup>

As more governments such as China are using AI systems in law enforcement, national security, criminal justice and border management systems, more people especially those from marginalised and disadvantaged communities would suffer human rights violations and abuses. In the case of Tibetans and other oppressed peoples in the PRC, there is no government accountability for such violations or fair access to effective judicial and non-judicial remedies.

31 Brian Nougères, Ana . “Principles Underpinning Privacy and the Protection of Personal Data.”A/77/196. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 20 Jul. 2022, [www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a77196-principles-underpinning-privacy-and-protection-personal-data](https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a77196-principles-underpinning-privacy-and-protection-personal-data).

32 Human Rights Council. “Report of the Human Rights Council on its forty-eighth session.”A/HRC/48/2. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner,23 Dec. 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session48/list-reports>.

## 6. FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF

### 6.1. ANTI-DALAI LAMA CAMPAIGNS

Under Xi Jinping, Chinese authorities have become more repressive in its approach to managing religious issues, most importantly the Tibetan reincarnation system and by extension the issue of the current Dalai Lama’s succession.

More than a decade after religious repression intensified, numerous acts deployed by the Chinese government to wage an anti-Dalai Lama campaign have resulted in gross violations of freedom of religion and belief in Tibet.

In January, Chinese authorities issued a [directive](#) requiring Tibetans working in government offices, schools or hospitals in all provinces and municipalities of TAR to cut all ties to the Dalai Lama.

There was no let-up in the Chinese policy of prosecuting Tibetans Tibetans for communicating with their relatives in foreign countries or offering prayers and religious offerings to religious leaders living abroad.



Geshe Rachung Gendun (left) and Sonam Gyatso(right)

In July, two Tibetan monks, Rachung Gendun and Sonam Gyatso, were [sentenced](#) to three and two years in prison respectively. They were detained in April 2021 and remained in undisclosed detention.<sup>33</sup>

33 “Prosecuting Tibetan Buddhists for Making Offerings to Spiritual Teachers Is a Violation of Freedom of Religion and Belief.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 10 Nov. 2022, [tchrd.org/prosecuting-tibetan-buddhists-for-making-offerings-to-spiritual-teachers-is-a-violation-of-freedom-of-religion-and-belief/](https://tchrd.org/prosecuting-tibetan-buddhists-for-making-offerings-to-spiritual-teachers-is-a-violation-of-freedom-of-religion-and-belief/).

Tsering Lhamo, older sister of Sonam Gyatso, who used to work at a bank in Ngaba, had been detained more than a year ago. Her condition and status remain unknown.

In October, Dolma Kyi, 68, resident of Ngaba County, was detained for 20 days before getting fined Chinese yuan 30000 (approx. US\$ 4000) for sending financial offerings to His Holiness the Dalai Lama through another person. She was stripped of her rights to basic medical insurance for five years and her resident identity card was blacklisted for five years.

In the intervening months of July to August, Tibetans in Nagchu City had their religious articles and ritual objects [confiscated](#) in random searches and raids, targeting the celebration of the Dalai Lama’s birthday on 6 July.<sup>34</sup>



Youdon and Zumkar. Photo: Central Tibetan Administration.

In July, two sisters Zumkar and Youdon were [detained](#) on separate dates in their hometown of Tsarang Township, Amdo County, Nagchu City for keeping a photo of the Dalai Lama in their home. Zumkar, 27, was detained first when police found a photo of the Dalai Lama on her altar. The younger sister Youdon is being detained in Lhasa.<sup>35</sup>

34 “Chinese Authorities Arrest Tibetan Man for Having a Photo of the Dalai Lama.” Radio Free Asia, 25 Aug. 2022, [www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/karma\\_samdup-08252022171832.html](http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/karma_samdup-08252022171832.html).  
35 “Tibetan Woman Arrested for Dalai Lama Photo.” *Radio Free Asia*, 14 Jul. 2022, [www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/dalailama-photo-07142022172240.html](http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/dalailama-photo-07142022172240.html).



Karma Samdup, photo: Radio Free Asia

On 12 August, Karma Samdup, from Sernye township in Nagchu was detained [incommunicado](#) after he was caught wearing a picture of the Dalai Lama around his neck and another one hanging in his car.<sup>36</sup>



Tenzin Dhargay

36 “Chinese Authorities Arrest Tibetan Man for Having a Photo of the Dalai Lama.” *Radio Free Asia*, 25 Aug. 2022, [www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/karma\\_samdup-08252022171832.html](http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/karma_samdup-08252022171832.html).



In September, two Tibetan monks named Tenzin Dhargye and Rigtse were sentenced to three years and six months and three years respectively for keeping [photos](#) of the Dalai Lama on their cell phones. They were sentenced after prolonged pretrial detention raising fears for their health and well-being. On his WeChat account named “Dalai’s Follower”, Dhargye used to [share](#) photos and teachings of the Dalai Lama.<sup>37</sup>

6.2. BAN ON RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION

The freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression are interdependent, interrelated, and mutually reinforcing. The right to freedom of expression is an essential element in the right to freedom of religion or belief.<sup>38</sup> The laws, policies, and practices that prohibit Tibetans from gathering for religious ceremonies, copying, distributing, or even reading traditional religious scripture, picking their own religious teachers, and from airing their grievances either online or offline, unequivocally breach the rights to the freedom of expression, and subsequently the freedom of religion.<sup>39</sup>

By far, the right to manifest one’s religion or belief is the most extensive and elaborate facet to the freedom of religion. Both Article 18(1) of the ICCPR and Article 1(1) of the 1981 Declaration include the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; and “the right to either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.”

The concept of worship covers ritual and ceremonial acts giving direct expression to belief, as well as various practices integral to such acts, including the building of places of worship, the use of ritual formulae, and objects, the display of symbols, and the observance of holidays and days of rest. In addition, the observance and practice of religion or belief may also include such customs as the observance of dietary regulations, the wearing of distinctive clothing or head coverings, participation in rituals associated with certain stages of life, and the use of a particular language, customarily spoken by a group.<sup>40</sup>

In January, Chinese authorities in Qinghai Province issued a directive that [banned](#) Tibetan social media groups related to religion and warned group members of further investigation and detention if they continued to use them. The directive was to take effect in March, when all online religious activities and events would face complete ban. Even the monitoring of approved online religious platforms will increase.

37 “Two Monks Sentenced to Prison for Challenging Chinese Government Propaganda.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights*, 28 Aug. 2022, [tchrd.org/two-monks-sentenced-to-prison-for-challenging-chinese-government-propaganda/](https://tchrd.org/two-monks-sentenced-to-prison-for-challenging-chinese-government-propaganda/).  
38 U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [UN OHCHR], Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism on the Incitement to Racial and Religious Hatred and the Promotion of Tolerance, para. 41, U.N. Doc A/HRC/2/3 (20 Sept. 2006) (delivered at the 2nd Session of the Human Rights Council).]  
39 “Dissenting Voices: Targeting the Intellectuals Writers and Cultural Figures.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 13 Aug. 2010, [tchrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/159903237-Dissenting-Voices-2010-Targeting-the-Intellectuals-Writers-and-Cultural-Figures.pdf](https://tchrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/159903237-Dissenting-Voices-2010-Targeting-the-Intellectuals-Writers-and-Cultural-Figures.pdf).  
40 Human Rights Committee, General Comment 22, Article 18 (Forty-eighth session, 1993). Compilation of General Comments and General Recommendations Adopted by Human Rights Treaty Bodies, U.N. Doc. HRI/GEN/1/Rev.1 at 35 (1994).

In March, Chinese authorities enforced a new regulation known as ‘Administrative Measures for Internet Religious Information Services’ that imposes various restrictions on the religious content published online.<sup>41</sup> The requirement to obtain government permits, valid for three years, to share religious information online meant that those unable to get the permit faced the prospects of “WeChat account demolition, website shutdown, and restrictions”.

Numerous violations of the right to manifest one’s religion or belief were reported in 2022 providing further evidence that nothing much has changed in the past decade when this right was found to be the most violated right by Chinese laws, policies, and practices.

On 24 August, five Tibetans - Chugdhar, Geylo, Tsedo, Bamo, and Kori – were detained for holding a religious ceremony burning junipers and reciting prayers on a mountaintop in Abo Kyiril Rigo Village in Khekor Township in Sertha (Ch: Seda) County, Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Chugdhar, 21, died in police custody due to torture injuries.<sup>42</sup>

In January, Chinese authorities began a campaign in nomadic areas in Golok (Ch: Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture to replace Tibetan prayer flags with Chinese national flags and block Tibetans from conducting Tibetan Buddhist ritual of sangsol, which involves burning juniper leaves, hoisting prayer flags and reciting prayers.<sup>43</sup>

Reports emerged in January of the June 2021 confiscation of the statue of a prominent Tibetan religious leader Tenzin Delek Rinpoche who died in Chinese prison while serving life imprisonment.<sup>44</sup> Four men including three Tibetans and a Chinese were detained and interrogated for 20 days for arranging the transportation and delivery of the statue from Dartsedo (Ch: Kangding) to Rinpoche’s hometown of Lithang.<sup>45</sup>

41 Li, Attonoy . “Reviewing How the Administrative Measures for Internet Religious Information Services Carried Out in Past Months Before September 1.” *China Christian Daily*, 2 Sept. 2022, [chinachristiandaily.com/news/china/2022-09-02/reviewing-how-the-administrative-measures-for-internet-religious-information-services-carried-out-in-past-months-before-september-1-\\_11854](https://chinachristiandaily.com/news/china/2022-09-02/reviewing-how-the-administrative-measures-for-internet-religious-information-services-carried-out-in-past-months-before-september-1-_11854).  
42 “Tibetan Man Succumbed to Custodial Torture.” *Voice of Tibet*, 20 Sept. 2022, [vot.org/%e0%bd%86%e0%bd%bc%e0%bd%a6%e0%bc%8b%e0%bd%95%e0%be%b1%e0%bd%bc%e0%bd%82%e0%bd%a6%e0%bc%8b%e0%bd%80%e0%be%b1%e0%bd%b2%e0%bc%8b%e0%bd%96%e0%be%b1%e0%bd%ba%e0%bd%91%e0%bc%8b%e0%bd%a6%e0%be%92%e0%bd%bc/](https://vot.org/%e0%bd%86%e0%bd%bc%e0%bd%a6%e0%bc%8b%e0%bd%95%e0%be%b1%e0%bd%bc%e0%bd%82%e0%bd%a6%e0%bc%8b%e0%bd%80%e0%be%b1%e0%bd%b2%e0%bc%8b%e0%bd%96%e0%be%b1%e0%bd%ba%e0%bd%91%e0%bc%8b%e0%bd%a6%e0%be%92%e0%bd%bc/).  
43 “China Takes down Tibetan Prayer Flags, Hoists China’s Flag Instead.” *Radio Free Asia*, 19 Jan. 2022, [www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/flags-01192022164856.html](https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/flags-01192022164856.html).  
44 “TCHRD Statement on the Death of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche in Chinese Prison.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 15 Jul. 2015, [tchrd.org/tchrd-statement-on-the-death-of-tenzin-delek-rinpoche-in-chinese-detention/](https://tchrd.org/tchrd-statement-on-the-death-of-tenzin-delek-rinpoche-in-chinese-detention/).  
45 “Statue of Revered Tibetan Monk Seized by Chinese Police.” *Radio Free Asia*, 14 Jan. 2022, [www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/seized-01142022152320.html](https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/seized-01142022152320.html).



Followers of Choktrul Dawa Rinpoche,46were restricted from attending the funeral ceremony held at his residence in Lhasa. Choktrul Dawa Rinpoche was a widely revered Tibetan lama who died on 30 January. People were warned against sharing any information about Rinpoche’s death online while pictures and videos that had already been shared online were deleted.<sup>47</sup>

Chinese authorities in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) and Dzoerge (Ch: Ruergai) counties reportedly issued threats in August to prosecute Tibetans posting messages to celebrate the 80th birthday of Kirti Rinpoche, the exiled head of Kirti Monastery and many other branch monasteries in Ngaba.<sup>48</sup>

Lotse, 57, a single father of two sons, was taken into police custody on 25 July for creating the chat group, which was set up to celebrate the birthdays of revered Tibetan lamas, in Sershul County, Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.<sup>49</sup>

46 “Ancient Tibetan Monastery under Siege over Reincarnation Issue; Mother of Two Attempts Suicide Protest.” Tibet-an Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 10 Sept. 2013, tchrd.org/ancient-tibetan-monastery-under-siege-over-re-incarnation-issue-mother-of-two-attempts-suicide-protest/.

47 “Funeral for Popular Tibetan Lama Restricted by Chinese Police.” Radio Free Asia, 25 Mar. 2022, www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/funeral-03252022092619.html.

48 “China Warns Tibetans Not to Post Birthday Wishes Online for Exiled Abbot.” Radio Free Asia, 4 Aug. 2022, www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/kirti-rinpoche-08042022175953.html.

49 “Tibetan Arrested for Creating ‘Unlawful’ WeChat Group.” Radio Free Asia, 27 Jul. 2022, www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/group-07272022131748.html.

7. EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE RIGHTS

7.1. FORCED CULTURAL ASSIMILATION POLICY

The intensification of the so-called ‘Second Generation Ethnic Policy’ (róng hé / 融合 / “intermingling”) under Xi Jinping is counteracting decades of policy of granting autonomous powers to minority nationalities in self-governance, as provided for in the Regional National Autonomy Law and related provisions in the Chinese Constitution.<sup>50</sup> While not denying the haphazard character of the implementation of the regional autonomy law throughout the decades, recent years mark a turning point insofar as the risks now involve the complete derogation of the regional autonomy law on a scale not seen since its 1984 launch.

Xi Jinping’s interpretation of the regional autonomy law, now being enforced under the rónghé policy, requires all ethnic affairs to be managed in accordance with the Chinese party-state’s overriding goal to create a modern socialist state built on a single national identity.

Serving as a tool for forced cultural assimilation, this policy has imposed drastic limitations on the use of Tibetan language in the educational system - both secular and monastic - thus directly threatening the survival of the Tibetan linguistic and cultural identity.

Under the forced cultural assimilation policy, Putonghua (Mandarin Chinese based on the Beijing dialect) enjoys a higher status and power compared to minority languages, which violates constitutional guarantees for regional autonomy, as well as the principle of equality and non-discrimination.

In place of culturally and socially relevant education, China’s Ministry of Education had issued in August 2021 guidelines on incorporating the “Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era” into the school curriculum covering basic, vocational, and higher education<sup>51</sup>. The contents of the curriculum are similar to those of the coercive “patriotic education”, insofar as both require students to “focus on cultivating love for the country, the party, and Socialism”.

Since 2020, Chinese authorities in the Tibetan and Inner Mongolian areas<sup>52</sup> have implemented the unified Putonghua textbook system, making Putonghua medium education mandatory in schools at all levels and grades. Both state and private schools are required to adopt the new sinicized textbooks, the contents of which are mostly party propaganda disparaging traditional Tibetan culture and world view as backward and superstition.

50 “Sucked Our Marrow: Tibetan Language and Education Rights under Xi Jinping.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 11 May 2022, tchrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Tibetan-Language-and-Education-Rights-Under-Xi-Jinping\_TCHRD-Thematic-Report.pdf.

51 “Xi Jinping Thought added into curriculum: Ministry of Education Xi Jinping Thought added into curriculum”, *Global Times*, 24 August 2021, globaltimes.cn/page/202108/1232364.shtml.

52 “Students in Inner Mongolia Protest Chinese Language Policy”, Huizhong Wu, *The Diplomat*, 2 September 2020, thediplomat.com/2020/09/students-in-inner-mongolia-protest-chinese-language-policy/.

7.2. PERSECUTION OF TIBETAN LANGUAGE ADVOCATES

This year witnessed the continued persecution of Tibetan language advocates, as Chinese authorities accelerated the policy to undermine and marginalise Tibetan language in the state education system as well as in monastic institutions.

Tibetan language rights advocate Tashi Wangchuk was detained on 17 January and interrogated in connection with his Weibo posts on language rights at the Kyegudo (Ch: Yushu) city police station in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture<sup>53</sup>.

He had been released on 28 January 2021 after serving five years in prison on false charges of “inciting separatism”, when all he did was to peacefully advocate for the protection and promotion of Tibetan language and culture, as guaranteed in the domestic legal provisions.

His Weibo account has remained inaccessible since 10 April.<sup>54</sup>

Tibetan university graduate Loten, 23, was taken into custody on 20 December in Matoe (Ch: Maduo) County, Golog (Ch: Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, for expressing his concerns about China’s language policy. He is reportedly being held at an unknown location in Xining, capital of Qinghai Province.<sup>55</sup>

In May, reports emerged of the November 2021 [detention](#) of Palsang, 24, for a WeChat post in which he expressed support for the use and development of Tibetan language.<sup>56</sup> He was detained around midnight from his home in Darlag (Ch: Dari) County, Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, where he was held for 15 days before being shifted to an unknown location in Xining.

7.3. FORCEFUL PROMOTION OF PUTONGHUA

Since China held its ‘first national language conference of the new era’ in Beijing in October 2020,<sup>57</sup> a host of Putonghua promotional activities such as “language conferences, special lectures, cadre training, seminars and exchanges” have been organised in various parts of Tibet.

53 “Tibetan language rights advocate Tashi Wangchuk interrogated in connection with Weibo posts questioning China’s language policy”, *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 23 January 2022, [tchrd.org/tibetan-language-rights-advocate-tashi-wangchuk-interrogated-in-connection-with-weibo-posts-questioning-chinas-language-policy/](https://tchrd.org/tibetan-language-rights-advocate-tashi-wangchuk-interrogated-in-connection-with-weibo-posts-questioning-chinas-language-policy/).

54 “TCHRD is Concerned about the Personal Liberty and Security of Tibetan Language Advocate Tashi Wangchuk”, *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 13 April 2022, [tchrd.org/tchrd-is-concerned-about-the-personal-liberty-and-security-of-tibetan-language-advocate-tashi-wangchuk-who-continues-to-face-harassment-more-than-a-year-after-release-from-prison/](https://tchrd.org/tchrd-is-concerned-about-the-personal-liberty-and-security-of-tibetan-language-advocate-tashi-wangchuk-who-continues-to-face-harassment-more-than-a-year-after-release-from-prison/).

55 “Tibetan Man Arrested for Speaking against China’s Language Policy.” *Radio Free Asia*, 11 Jan. 2022, [www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/policy-01112022144007.html](https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/policy-01112022144007.html).

56 “Another Tibetan Man Arrested for Wechat Comments.” *Free Tibet*, 4 May 2022, [freetibet.org/latest/another-tibetan-man-arrested-for-wechat-comments/](https://freetibet.org/latest/another-tibetan-man-arrested-for-wechat-comments/).

57 “Local language committees uphold integrity and innovation, deepen reform and earnestly implement the spirit of the National Language Conference”, *Ministry of Education*, 22 October 2021 [moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_sjzl/s3165/202110/t20211022\\_574399.html](https://moe.gov.cn/jyb_sjzl/s3165/202110/t20211022_574399.html).

In Qinghai, local authorities issued the ‘Action Plan for Preschool Children’s Putonghua Ability Improvement (2021-2025)’, which involves spending billions of yuan introducing Putonghua learning to preschool children, particularly in kindergartens, to “promote the all-round development of preschool Putonghua education”.<sup>58</sup>

China’s Ministry of Education has tasked various party and government departments and agencies, such as the Communist Youth League and the China Vocational Education Society, to conduct Putonghua classes in both secular and monastic communities in minority regions<sup>59</sup>.

By 20 April 2022, all [privately-run](#) schools were closed, and students were forcibly enrolled in government boarding schools in Sershul (Ch: Shiqu) County, Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.<sup>60</sup> This closure order affected six known Tibetan primary schools: Gemang, Bumser, Troshul, Asey, Phendey Chekyong, and Warong.

In early March, all the school textbooks in Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture were [replaced](#) by Chinese ones.<sup>61</sup> Monastic institutions have already been banned from conducting Tibetan language classes for school children during winter holidays. Similar situations were witnessed in the Tibetan areas of Sichuan Province, as well as in Lhasa - where, except for the Tibetan language classes, all other subjects are taught in Chinese.

From February to March in Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, a series of mandatory [workshops](#) were held to teach Chinese language to local officials and parents.<sup>62</sup> In addition to providing Putonghua classes, these [workshops](#) were used to disseminate Chinese government propaganda on the importance of Chinese medium education in the overall policy of Xi Jinping’s ‘Chinese Dream’. Such initiatives are clearly aimed at discouraging parents from speaking Tibetan to their children in the privacy of their homes.

58 “Local language committees uphold integrity and innovation, deepen reform and earnestly implement the spirit of the National Language Conference”, *Ministry of Education*, 22 October 2021 [moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_sjzl/s3165/202110/t20211022\\_574399.html](https://moe.gov.cn/jyb_sjzl/s3165/202110/t20211022_574399.html).

59 “Xi Jinping sent a letter to congratulate the holding of the first major country craftsman innovation exchange conference”, *China Vocational Education Association*, 27 April 2022, [zhzjs.org.cn](https://zhzjs.org.cn).

60 “China Orders Tibetan Private Schools to Be Closed and Students Enrolled in Chinese Medium Schools in Sershul County.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 22 Apr. 2022, [tchrd.org/china-orders-tibetan-private-schools-to-be-closed-and-students-enrolled-in-chinese-medium-schools-in-sershul-county/](https://tchrd.org/china-orders-tibetan-private-schools-to-be-closed-and-students-enrolled-in-chinese-medium-schools-in-sershul-county/).

61 “Tibetan School Year Begins with Classes Taught Only in Chinese.” *Radio Free Asia*, 9 Mar. 2022, [www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/classes-03092022122044.html](https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/classes-03092022122044.html).

62 “Tibetan Parents Forced to Learn Chinese Language to Teach Children.” *Tibet Watch*, 11 Apr. 2022, [www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/classes-03092022122044.html](https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/classes-03092022122044.html).





Tibetan parents in Nyima County, Nagchu City, TAR, giving a test on the national common language in a secondary school. Photo: Tibet Watch.

In March, local officials and party members as well as local Tibetans in Nyima (Ch: Nima) County, Nagchu City, TAR, attended a government-organised workshop where they were required to learn Chinese language and familiarise themselves with the ‘Xi Jinping Thought’, before transmitting these lessons to fellow villagers upon returning home.

## 8. ARBITRARY DETENTION AND TORTURE

### 8.1. DEATH IN DETENTION

Tibetan political detainees and prisoners continued to die in detention due to torture injuries. While some died without charges or in pretrial detention, there were also those who died soon after their release from prisons. In September, a Tibetan man named Sherab [died](#) of police beatings within days of detention for breaking Covid lockdown rules in Shigatse (Ch: Xigaze) City, TAR. He had been detained along with Loden, another Tibetan man who was admitted to the hospital for treatment of torture injuries. Bearing injury marks all over his body, Loden was unable to speak or move his body. Both had gone out to bring food to their family members living in remote, nomadic communities for which they were apprehended by the police.<sup>63</sup>



Tibetan driver Ngodup Tsering (right) dies after being allegedly tortured in Gyezur County police station in Dartsedo. Photo: Tibet Times.

On 28 September, a Tibetan driver named Ngodup Tsering [succumbed](#) to custodial torture a day after his detention at the local police station in Gyezur County in Dartsedo (Ch: Kangding) City, Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Police detained him for delivering groceries to an old age home and “trying to ruin the reputation of the government when the needs of the home were taken care of by the government.” Tsering is survived by his elderly mother, wife and two children.<sup>64</sup>

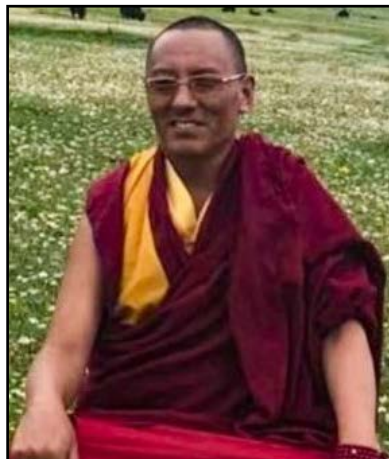
<sup>63</sup> “Chinese Police Beats Tibetan Man to Death.” Tibet Times, 9 Sept. 2022, tibettimes.net/2022/09/09/221994/.

<sup>64</sup> “Tibetan Driver Succumbs to Custodial Torture by Chinese Police.” Tibet Times, 28 Sept. 2022, tibettimes.net/2022/09/28/222239/.





Earlier on 2 July, Jigme Gyatso AKA Labrang Jigme, a prominent human rights defender known for his remarkable courage and strength of character, died at his home in Sangchu (Ch: Xiahe) County, Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.<sup>65</sup> He had been released in October 2016 after serving a five-year sentence on the trumped-up charge of “inciting separatism”. Upon release, he was suffering from multiple health complications including diabetes, hypertension, and other complications related to his heart, liver and eyes. Continued police surveillance and other restrictions such as not being able to recover his national ID card meant that his family could not seek proper and safe medical treatment at private hospitals.<sup>66</sup> He was instead admitted into government hospitals where his condition did not improve.



A senior Tibetan monk who was imprisoned for six years for advocating for the right to freedom of speech and freedom of religion died in September in his hometown of Drango (Ch: Luhuo) County in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.<sup>67</sup> Geshe Tenzin Palsang, 57, was detained in April 2012 and released in poor health in 2018. He had been held in prolonged pretrial detention during which he suffered extreme torture unable to get prompt and proper medical care. After release, his health further deteriorated, making his recovery impossible even as local authorities imposed strict surveillance on his movement and activities

## 8.2. INCOMMUNICADO DETENTION

Chinese authorities engaged in the widespread use of incommunicado detention and enforced disappearances to silence critics and suppress dissent in Tibet. Tibetan political detainees were subjected to lengthy incommunicado detention, which frequently involves torture and ill-treatment, in addition to denial of due process and contact with the outside world including family members.

- 65 “China Must Prosecute Government Officials Responsible for the Death of Prominent Tibetan Human Rights Defender Jigme Gyatso.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 4 Jul. 2022, [tchrd.org/china-must-prosecute-government-officials-responsible-for-the-death-of-prominent-tibetan-human-rights-defender-jigme-gyatso/](https://tchrd.org/china-must-prosecute-government-officials-responsible-for-the-death-of-prominent-tibetan-human-rights-defender-jigme-gyatso/).
- 66 “Recently Released Tibetan Political Prisoner Hospitalized with Multiple Diseases, Deprived of Basic Rights and under Police Surveillance.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 27 Dec. 2016, [tchrd.org/recently-released-tibetan-political-prisoner-hospitalized-with-multiple-diseases-deprived-of-basic-rights-and-under-police-surveillance/](https://tchrd.org/recently-released-tibetan-political-prisoner-hospitalized-with-multiple-diseases-deprived-of-basic-rights-and-under-police-surveillance/).
- 67 “Tibetan Monk Dies After Years of Ill Health following Release from Prison.” *Radio Free Asia*, 11 Aug. 2022, [www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/tibet-monk-dies-11082022162156.html](https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/tibet-monk-dies-11082022162156.html).



On 24 May, Mr Tenzin Choephel was sentenced to 18 years in prison and five years’ “deprivation of political rights” for allegedly committing various crimes including “inciting separatism”, “illegally sending intelligence overseas”, and “financing activities that endangered state security” Mr Choephel was a well-known Tibetan entrepreneur and philanthropist in Tarchen (Ch: Daqen) Township in Sernye (Ch: Sèni) District, Nagchu City. Detained on 20 March 2012, he was held in incommunicado detention for more than a year before sentencing.<sup>68</sup>

Rinchen Samdrup, a Tibetan businessman dealing in horses in Tsosar Town, remains missing since his detention on an unknown date in May 2022 from a hotel room in Kardze County.<sup>69</sup> He is being held in an unknown location for allegedly committing crimes of “endangering state security”.



Brothers Tenzin Norbu (left) and Wangchen Nyima (right), photo: Tibet Watch

Two Tibetan monks who are brothers remained missing since their detention on 15 August 2021 in Tawu (Ch: Daoфу) County, Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.<sup>70</sup> Tenzin Norbu and Wangchen Nyima are nephews of Tulku Choekyi Nyima, the abbot of Nenang Monastery, Drango (Ch: Luhuo) County, where local Tibetans are known for putting up a strong resistance against the Chinese government.<sup>71</sup> Five months into incommunicado detention, family members of the monks have not been notified of their detention and charges.

- 68 “Tibetan Entrepreneur and Philanthropist Tenzin Choephel Sentenced to 18 Years in Prison for “Inciting Separatism”.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 25 Jul. 2022, [tchrd.org/china-must-end-enforced-disappearance-of-tibetan-environmental-and-cultural-advocate/](https://tchrd.org/china-must-end-enforced-disappearance-of-tibetan-environmental-and-cultural-advocate/).
- 69 “Rinchen Samdup Missing After Detention.” *Tibet Times*, 12 Sept. 2022, [tibettimes.net/2022/09/12/222014/](https://tibettimes.net/2022/09/12/222014/).
- 70 “Two Tibetan Monks Arrested, Held with No Word to Their Family.” *Radio Free Asia*, 12 Jan. 2022, [www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/monks-01122022152154.html](https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/monks-01122022152154.html).
- 71 “China Subjects Tibetan Detainees to ‘Re-education’ and Tightens Restrictions on Social Media After Destroying Buddha Statues in Drango.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 23 Feb. 2022, [tchrd.org/china-subjects-tibetan-detainees-to-re-education-and-tightens-restrictions-on-social-media-after-destroying-buddha-statues-in-drango/](https://tchrd.org/china-subjects-tibetan-detainees-to-re-education-and-tightens-restrictions-on-social-media-after-destroying-buddha-statues-in-drango/).



Topgah (left) and Sardak (right), photo: Tibet Times

Two Tibetan men Topgah, 20, and Sardrak, 25, were detained on 18 June and taken to the police station on 12 Beijing Road in Lhasa City. Their whereabouts and condition remain unknown.<sup>72</sup> Both men had come from their hometown in Chumarleb (Ch; Qumalei) County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture to central Tibet where they used to sell religious objects like khatas and butter lamps in front of the Tashi Lhunpo monastery in Shigatse City.



Tsewang Rinchen, photo: Tibet Times

<sup>72</sup> “Two Tibetan Men Detained.” *Tibet Times*, 24 Jun. 2022, tibettimes.net/2022/06/24/220667/.

Tsewang Rinchen was sentenced to one and a half years in prison and fined 35000 yuan on 16 July for “showing leniency in government matters and misusing authority to engage in bias”.<sup>73</sup> He was a staff in the Rinpung county government in Shigatse City before his detention in May. He was held in incommunicado detention for two months of rigorous interrogation. He first came on the radar of Chinese authorities in 2013 when he criticised the Chinese government’s nomad relocation and resettlement policy.

### 8.3. PRISONERS’ RIGHTS

Tibetan political prisoners and detainees continue to die or remain missing and yet there is no accountability from the Chinese authorities responsible for their inhumane torture and deaths. The use of torture, with impunity, has created a situation where Tibetan political prisoners are dying in detention. These deaths and other grave human rights violations could have been prevented if Chinese prisons and detention facilities had guaranteed human rights of the detainees and prisoners.

Tibetan prisoners lack even the most basic rights of prisoners such as contacting family or hiring a lawyer. Family members of Rinchen Tsultrim, 32, have not been allowed to meet with him since his detention on 27 July 2019 in Ngaba County.<sup>74</sup> He has been serving a four-and-a-half year prison term for “inciting separatism”. His crimes included maintaining contacts with Tibetans outside Tibet on the birth anniversary of the 11th Panchen Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. He was also a vocal critic of Chinese policies on Tibetan religion, culture and language about which he wrote on his blog, which was later shut down.<sup>75</sup>

The whereabouts and status of a Tibetan businessman Tharpa (alternatively spelled as Tarpa), 39, remained unknown since his detention in June 2020.<sup>76</sup> In August 2022, it was learned for the first time that he had been sentenced to two years and six months for helping local Tibetans send money to their family members and relatives in India.<sup>77</sup> Due for release in December, there are great concerns about his health because he was held in prolonged incommunicado detention.

Under international law, torture is prohibited in all circumstances. The Convention Against Torture, Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment (Convention Against Torture) prohibits torture and requires State Parties to take effective measures to prevent torture, and prosecute torturers.<sup>78</sup> The PRC became a State Party to the Convention Against Torture in 1988.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>73</sup> “Tsewang Rinchen Sentenced.” *Tibet Times*, 28 Jul. 2022, tibettimes.net/2022/07/28/221262/.

<sup>74</sup> “Jailed Tibetan Monk Not Allowed to Meet with Family.” Radio Free Asia, 7 Jun. 2022, www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/monk-06072022144035.html.

<sup>75</sup> “No Trace of Ngaba Tibetan Monk Held Incommunicado for Almost a Year and Half.” Tibet.Net, 30 Nov. 2020, tibet.net/no-trace-of-ngaba-tibetan-monk-held-incommunicado-for-almost-a-year-and-half/.

<sup>76</sup> “China: Tibetan Woman Dies in Custody.” Human Rights Watch, 29 Oct. 2020, www.hrw.org/news/2020/10/29/china-tibetan-woman-dies-custody.

<sup>77</sup> “Tibetan Businessman Detained Incommunicado Found to Be Sentenced to 2.5 Years in Prison.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 2 Aug. 2022, tchrd.org/tibetan-businessman-detained-incommunicado-found-to-be-sentenced-to-2-5-years-in-prison/.

<sup>78</sup> UN General Assembly, Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1465 UNTS 85. 10 Dec. 1984.

<sup>79</sup> Ratification of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Committee Against Torture, [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CAT/OHCHR\\_Map\\_CAT.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CAT/OHCHR_Map_CAT.pdf).



Additionally, the PRC has publically condemned torture and voluntarily adopted standards designed to prevent torture, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (SMR), also known as the Nelson Mandela Rules.<sup>80</sup> The SMR is a universally acknowledged benchmark for prison administration.<sup>81</sup>

Among the good principles and practices in the treatment of prisoners and the management of institutions that the SMR advocates for, Rule 71(1) states that a prison director should conduct “prompt, impartial and effective investigations” into the circumstances and causes of any custodial death or disappearance.<sup>82</sup> Investigations should be conducted “whenever there are reasonable grounds to believe that an act of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment has been committed in prison, irrespective of whether a formal complaint has been received [Rule 71(2)].”

Rule 72 requires prison administration to treat with “respect and dignity” the body of a deceased prisoner, which “should be returned to his or her next of kin as soon as reasonably possible, and “facilitate a culturally appropriate funeral”.

Rule 65 provides for the right to freedom of religion and belief to prisoners by requiring that a qualified religious representative be “allowed to hold regular services and to pay pastoral visits in private to prisoners of his or her religion at proper times.”

The SMR also emphasises the human rights of detainees awaiting trial such as the right to be promptly informed about the reasons for his or her detention [Rule 119(1)] and access to due process [Rule 119(2)].

80 “Expert Group Meeting on the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners Buenos Aires, 11 to 13 December 2012.” UNODC/CCPCJ/EG.6/2012/CRP.1, 30 Nov. 2012, [www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/EGM-Uploads/IEGM-SMR\\_II\\_CRP\\_prepared\\_by\\_the\\_Secretariat.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/EGM-Uploads/IEGM-SMR_II_CRP_prepared_by_the_Secretariat.pdf).

81 ““Mandela Rules” Passed, Standards on the Treatment of Prisoners Enhanced for the 21st Century.” United Nations Economic and Social Council, Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 22 May 2015, [www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2015/May/mandela-rules-passed--standards-on-the-treatment-of-prisoners-enhanced-for-the-21st-century.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2015/May/mandela-rules-passed--standards-on-the-treatment-of-prisoners-enhanced-for-the-21st-century.html).

82 “The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, [www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/GA-RESOLUTION/E\\_ebook.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/GA-RESOLUTION/E_ebook.pdf).

## 9. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

### 9.1. SELF-IMMOLATION PROTESTS

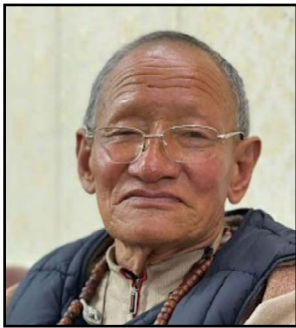
A series of highly repressive policies and practices to halt self-immolations have been enforced in Tibet since the first self-immolation took place in 2009. The Chinese authorities outlawed not only the act itself but also related acts, such as praying for self-immolators, publicly carrying photographs of self-immolators, and sending information about self-immolators to outsiders.<sup>83</sup> The collective punitive measures targeted the families of self-immolators, as well as their villages and/or monasteries.<sup>84</sup>

The Chinese government sees all self-immolators and other protesters as ‘separatist’ and a threat to state security, thereby placing them at risk of enforced disappearance, torture, and death.<sup>85</sup>

In addition, Chinese domestic laws have systematically and cumulatively made it virtually impossible for Tibetans to peacefully assemble and associate. These legal provisions go beyond what would be reasonable and proportionate.

In the intervening months of February to March, which are always marked by heightened government restrictions and control to prevent any signs of dissent, three self-immolations were reported in Tibet.

March is considered a ‘politically sensitive’ month by Chinese authorities because of the 10 March anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day that led to the exile of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other Tibetans in 1959. The annual sessions of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and the National People’s Congress (NPC) are also held in the same month, leading to heightened restrictions in all parts of Tibet.



On 27 March, Mr. Tashi Phuntsok AKA Taphun, 81, died of self-immolation in front of the Public Security Bureau (PSB) office at Kirti Monastery in Ngaba County.<sup>86</sup> He became one of the oldest Tibetans to self-immolate in protest against the Chinese government.

“Taphun was a true patriot and held great concerns about the future of Tibet, which became clear during his 80th birthday celebration last year when he told the gathering, “Young [Tibetans] should not lose heart! The sun of

83 China detains family members after Tibetan nonviolence activist dies of self-immolation, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 21 Apr. 2015, <http://www.tchrd.org/china-detains-family-members-after-tibetan-nonviolence-activist-dies-of-self-immolation/>.

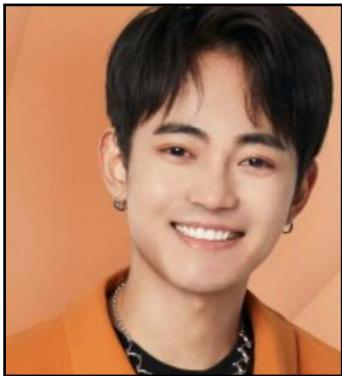
84 USCIRF, Annual Report 2015, <https://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/USCIRF%20Annual%20Report%202015%20%282%29.pdf>.

85 “China detains family members after Tibetan nonviolence activist dies of self-immolation.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 21 Apr. 2015. <http://www.tchrd.org/china-detains-family-members-after-tibetan-nonviolence-activist-dies-of-self-immolation/>.

86 “Tibetan Man, 81, Dies Of Self-Immolation Protest Against Chinese Government.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 4 Apr. 2022, [tchrd.org/tibetan-man-81-dies-of-self-immolation-protest-against-chinese-government/](http://tchrd.org/tibetan-man-81-dies-of-self-immolation-protest-against-chinese-government/).



happiness will certainly shine over Tibet with the blessings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama!””



Tsewang Norbu, 25, is a popular Tibetan singer who died after staging a self-immolation protest on 25 February in front of the historic Potala Palace in Lhasa. He remained unidentified for days due to extreme restrictions on communication and online spaces in Tibet.<sup>87</sup> Three days before his self-immolation, he uploaded on his Weibo account some lines from his new song, “Don’t fail to remain silent despite distress”: “I read all your comments. Thank you! After getting disheartened, I am at peace now. If you too are disheartened, do not fail to remain silent.”<sup>88</sup>

Norbu had shouted slogans during his self-immolation protest but couldn’t continue for long due to his swift detention by security forces deployed near the Potala Palace. His uncle, Lodoe Gyatso, previously imprisoned for 23 years, is now serving a new 18-year sentence for protesting in front of the Potala Palace in January 2018.<sup>89</sup>

On 30 March, Tsering Samdup, described by local Tibetans as a well-educated man, self-immolated in front of a police station near a Buddhist monastery in Kyegudo (Ch: Jiegu), Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.<sup>90</sup> He was immediately taken away by local police and there is no information on his condition or whereabouts.

In August, new information emerged about an incident that happened nearly a decade earlier, revealing that forced confessions were used to justify official restrictions on self-immolations. A Tibetan monk named Tseta, 25, had been detained and tortured for about seven months shortly after Tenzin Sherab, 33, died of self-immolation in May 2013 in Chumarleb (Ch: Qumalai) County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.<sup>91</sup> A disciplinarian (dean of a monastic institute) at the local Adril monastery, Tseta was taken into custody for taking photos of Sherab’s body and sharing them with outsiders.

One of the measures enforced by Chinese authorities to stem the tide of self-immolation protests is to imprison people associated with self-immolators on murder charges. On 31 August, Pema Dhondup was released after serving a 12-year prison term for “murder” in connection with a 2012 self-immolation of

87 “Self-immolation Attempt at Tibet’S Potala Palace Thwarted by Chinese Police.” Radio Free Asia, 26 Feb. 2022, [www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/potala-immolation-02262022171751.html](http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/potala-immolation-02262022171751.html).  
88 “Popular Tibetan Singer Tsewang Norbu Dies of Self-immolation Protest.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 15 Mar. 2022, [tchrd.org/popular-tibetan-singer-tsewang-norbu-dies-of-self-immolation-protest/](http://tchrd.org/popular-tibetan-singer-tsewang-norbu-dies-of-self-immolation-protest/).  
89 “Former Tibetan Political Prisoner Sentenced to 18 Years for Protest; Wife Given 2 Years for Filming Video.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 15 Mar. 2019, [tchrd.org/former-tibetan-political-prisoner-sentenced-to-18-years-for-protest-wife-given-2-years-for-filming-video/](http://tchrd.org/former-tibetan-political-prisoner-sentenced-to-18-years-for-protest-wife-given-2-years-for-filming-video/).  
90 “Tibet Man Attempts Self-immolation near Monastery in Qinghai.” Radio Free Asia, 31 Mar. 2022, [www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/yushul-immolation-03312022125553.html](http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/yushul-immolation-03312022125553.html).  
91 “Monk Disciplinarian Detained in Connection with 2013 Self-immolation Tortured in Undisclosed Location.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 10 Aug. 2022, [tchrd.org/monk-disciplinarian-detained-in-connection-with-2013-self-immolation-tortured-in-undisclosed-location%EF%BF%BC/](http://tchrd.org/monk-disciplinarian-detained-in-connection-with-2013-self-immolation-tortured-in-undisclosed-location%EF%BF%BC/).

Dorje Rinchen in Sangchu (Ch: Xiahe) County, Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.<sup>92</sup> His only crime was that he took care of Dorje Rinchen’s body after his self-immolation.

9.2. CRACKDOWN ON WRITERS, INTELLECTUALS AND CULTURAL FIGURES

Tibetan writers, intellectuals, musicians, artists, teachers, students, activists, and bloggers, internet-savvy and fluent in both Chinese and Tibetan, have been facing increasing persecution since they boldly expressed their views challenging China’s grossly distorted narrative of the causes and consequences of the 2008 Uprising.<sup>93</sup>

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China’s policy to suppress influential and dissident voices, by spreading fear among those who dare to document human rights violations or express their views, has continued unabated. In September, six Tibetans (among whom writers, public intellectuals, teachers, and environmental defenders) were sentenced to prison terms varying from 4 to 14 years.<sup>94</sup>



Gangkye Drupa Kyab, a writer and public intellectual, was sentenced to 14 years in prison in Serthar County, Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. He had earlier served five and a half years of imprisonment from 2012 onwards for being a member of an underground association named ‘Margol Tsogpa’ (Anti-Communist Association) in Nyagchu (Ch: Yajiang) County, Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. On 16 September 2016, upon his release from prison, he was detained again for holding a portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on his head at a public banquet held to celebrate his own release from prison.



Pema Rinchen (Pen name: ལྷ་ཁོར་ ‘Poisoned Thorn’), a writer from Drango (Ch: Luhuo) County, was sentenced to four years in prison. He was previously detained for publishing his book Look (2011), and the extreme torture he was subjected to in detention resulted in long-lasting health complications.

92 “Authorities Free Tibetan Sentenced in Connection with Burning.” *Radio Free Asia*, 8 Sept. 2022, [www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/release-09082022181011.html](http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/release-09082022181011.html).  
93 “Dissenting Voices (2010): Targeting the Intellectuals Writers and Cultural Figures.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 13 Aug. 2010, [tchrd.org/dissenting-voices-2010-targeting-the-intellectuals-writers-and-cultural-figures/](http://tchrd.org/dissenting-voices-2010-targeting-the-intellectuals-writers-and-cultural-figures/).  
94 “Tibetan Writer Goyon Believed to Be Released from Detention Even As China Sentenced Six More Writers and Former Tibetan Political Prisoners.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 6 Dec. 2022, [tchrd.org/tibetan-writer-goyon-believed-to-be-released-from-detention-even-as-china-sentenced-six-more-writers-and-former-tibetan-political-prisoners/](http://tchrd.org/tibetan-writer-goyon-believed-to-be-released-from-detention-even-as-china-sentenced-six-more-writers-and-former-tibetan-political-prisoners/).



Tsering Dolma from Serthar County was sentenced to eight years in prison. She had suffered torture during a previous detention, when she was held along with her father in connection with the 2008 protests. Tortured for months, she suffers from long-lasting health complications, including amnesia and heart disease.



Influential Tibetan writer and teacher Thupten Lodoe (pseudonym: Sabuchey), 34, was sentenced to four years and six months in prison in June.<sup>95</sup> He had previously been held in an undisclosed location for more than eight months on charges of “inciting separatism” - including publishing contents that “endangered state security” and “harmed ethnic unity”, among others.<sup>96</sup> He wrote in Tibetan and Chinese, and much of his writings focused on various socio-economic subjects and issues relevant to the situation in Tibet. He is considered as one of the most influential and respected writers of his generation.



Gangbu Yudrum was sentenced to seven years. He had previously been imprisoned for three years from 2008 onwards for protesting with the Tibetan national flag and shouting slogans in favour of the return of the Dalai Lama. Again in 2012, he was sentenced to two years in prison for his involvement in Margol Tsogpa.



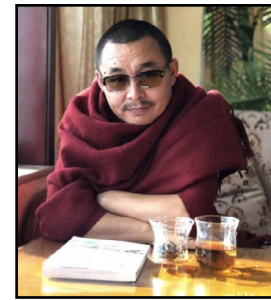
Senam, a writer, Tibetan language teacher and an environmental defender from Toktsa Village (Ragtam Township, Serthar County), was sentenced to six years in prison. He had earlier been detained for 15 days for participating in a meeting on the “welfare of Tibetan parents” deemed illegal by the authorities.

95 “Tibetan Intellectual and Writer Sabuchey Sentenced to Four and a Half Years in Prison.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 18 Jun. 2022, [tchrd.org/tibetan-intellectual-and-writer-sabuchey-sentenced-to-four-and-a-half-years-in-prison/](https://tchrd.org/tibetan-intellectual-and-writer-sabuchey-sentenced-to-four-and-a-half-years-in-prison/).

96 “China Must End Cultural Assimilation Campaign and Crackdown on Tibetan Intellectuals and Cultural Leaders.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 27 Dec. 2021, [tchrd.org/china-must-end-cultural-assimilation-campaign-and-crackdown-on-tibetan-intellectuals-and-cultural-leaders/](https://tchrd.org/china-must-end-cultural-assimilation-campaign-and-crackdown-on-tibetan-intellectuals-and-cultural-leaders/).



Samdup, 41, was sentenced to eight years in prison. He had previously served five years in prison in 2012, on the same charges as Gangkye Drupa Kyab.



Another well-known writer, Rongwo Gendun Lhundup, 48, had been sentenced to four years in prison and two years of “deprivation of political rights” on 1 December 2021.<sup>97</sup> His condition remained unknown for almost two years following his detention in November 2020. He was convicted for “inciting separatism” via his critical writings and speeches against Chinese policy in Tibet. He wrote under the pseudonym ‘Lhamkok’ (Eng: Shoe).

### 9.3. RESTRICTIONS ON ONLINE SPACES

The Tibetan online space is tightly controlled, as evidenced by numerous violations of freedom of expression, opinion and information documented in this report. Other repressive directives and campaigns were introduced during the zero-Covid lockdowns.

A new rectification campaign introduced in May targeted the ‘illegal’ use of short videos and webcasts to “undermine national religious policies,” “promote harmful information about religion,” and “spread xie jiao [cults] and feudal superstitions.”<sup>98</sup> Campaigns of this nature often target legitimate dissent violating human rights in the name of rectifying or purging the elements deemed subversive or inimical to the party-state’s interests. The TAR Cyberspace Administration announced “a special rectification work in the field of online live broadcasting and short videos in the whole region” to confront “social threats.”

The campaign announcement highlighted the “Administrative Measures for Internet Religious Information Services”<sup>99</sup> that came into force on 1 March 2022.<sup>100</sup> The ‘Administrative Measures’ subject all online platforms to government control, and any references to religion online are deemed illegal if not approved

97 “Renowned Tibetan Writer Rongwo Gendun Lhundup Sentenced to Four Years in Prison.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 18 Jun. 2022, [tchrd.org/17214-2/](https://tchrd.org/17214-2/).

98 “Announcement of the Tibet Autonomous Region Cyberspace Administration on Accepting Reports of Online Live and Short Video Chaos Information”, 5 May 2022 [https://wxb.xzdw.gov.cn/wlaq/yjtb/202205/t20220505\\_241714.html](https://wxb.xzdw.gov.cn/wlaq/yjtb/202205/t20220505_241714.html)

99 See preceding paragraphs for discussion on this regulation.

100 “Announcement of the Tibet Autonomous Region Cyberspace Administration on Accepting Reports on Chaos in Online Live Streaming and Short Video Platforms .” News Sina, 7 May 2022, [news.sina.com.cn/c/2022-05-07/doc-imcwiwst6010219.shtml#/](https://news.sina.com.cn/c/2022-05-07/doc-imcwiwst6010219.shtml#/).



by the relevant authorities on religion.<sup>101</sup> The requirement to obtain a renewable licence before opening an online account or website has made the exercise of the right to freedom of religion and belief highly difficult online.

As is typical for all official announcements and directives of that nature, the rectification campaign invites the general public to report on those breaking official censorship rules. In July, days before the Dalai Lama’s birthday, a public notice by the Lhasa Public Security Bureau offered prize money to Tibetans reporting on crimes against “state security” in order to “build an iron wall of stability.” Targets of the notice include activities related to Tibetan activism, deemed illegal and criminal by the authorities.<sup>102</sup>

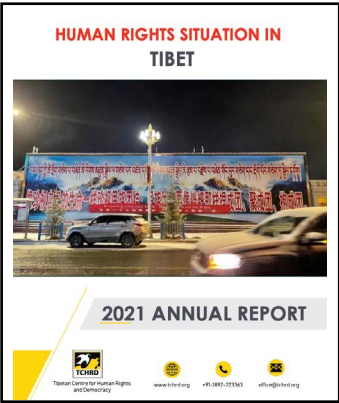
Domestic censorship regulations lead Chinese tech companies to invisibilise Tibetans from the Chinese cyberspace by deleting their posts and accounts and reporting them to the internet police. In October, five Tibetans were detained in connection with the popular Chinese short-video sharing platform Kuaishou<sup>103</sup>: a live online contest was abruptly cut short, apparently following instructions from the site’s censors. In 2018, Kuaishou reportedly had a self-censorship team of 2000 employees, and was planning to hire another 3000 censors to ensure its users did not violate Chinese government regulations.<sup>104</sup>

In November 2021, Chinese tech companies were found removing content in the Tibetan and Uyghur languages from their platforms. Talkmate, a language learning app which partners with UNESCO, took down its offerings in Tibetan and Uyghur languages. The popular Chinese streaming service Bilibili quickly followed, banning comments posted in Tibetan and Uyghur. On Douyin, the Chinese TikTok, livestreamers speaking in a language other than Mandarin Chinese are asked to switch to Mandarin or else they risk cutting off the livestream - regardless of its content.<sup>105</sup>

101 “Tibet: No Religion Allowed in Social Media Short Videos and Webcasts.” Bitter Winter, 19 May 2022, bitterwinter.org/tibet-no-religion-allowed-in-social-media/.  
102 “Lhasa Police Offer Rewards for Reporting Dissenting Views, Tibetan Activism.” International Campaign for Tibet, 8 Jul. 2022, savetibet.org/lhasa-police-offer-rewards-for-reporting-dissenting-views-tibetan-activism/.  
103 “Singer and Musician among Five Detained for Dalai Lama Song on Chinese Social Media.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 15 Oct. 2022, tchrd.org/singer-and-musician-among-five-detained-for-dalai-lama-song-on-chinese-social-media/.  
104 “China’s video app to add 3,000 content reviewers, Communist Party members preferred.” South China Morning Post, 9 Apr 2018, https://www.scmp.com/tech/article/2140868/chinese-video-app-kuaishou-hiring-3000-more-reviewers-police-content-after/.  
105 “Chinese Tech Companies Appear to Censor Uyghur and Tibetan.” Protocol, 8 Nov. 2021, www.protocol.com/china/bilibili-talkmate-uyghur-tibetan-tech.

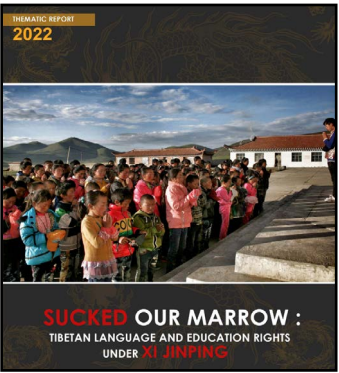
10. TCHRD: YEAR IN REVIEW

2021 Annual Report on Human Rights Situation in Tibet



The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) released its 2021 Annual Report on the human rights situation in Tibet at a press conference in Dharamshala, a day after the 11th Panchen Lama’s 33rd birthday. The report available in three languages: Tibetan, Chinese, and English, documents the persistent and grave human rights violations committed by the government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), involving arbitrary detention and torture, religious repression, and a widespread crackdown on the right to freedom of expression and information. The report is available for free download on TCHRD’s official website.<sup>106</sup>

Special Report on Tibetan Language and Education Rights



The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy along with its partner organisation, Asian Dignity Initiative launched a joint report on 11 May 2022 at the Tibet Museum in Dharamshala, India. The report highlights how a decade of president Xi Jinping at the helm, executing a forced cultural assimilation policy under the guise of ‘ethnic policy in the new era,’ has devastating consequences on education and language rights in Tibet. In recent years, non-governmental initiatives to promote the Tibetan language and culture in Tibet have increasingly come under attack. Private educational institutions, including those previously approved by the party-state, are being closed down, and monastic institutions are being forced to prioritise Putonghua teaching and propagation<sup>107</sup>.

51st UN Human Rights Council Session



The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) represented by the executive director Ms Tsering Tsomo and senior program officer Ms Tenzin Dawa attended working sessions of the 51st Human Rights Councilsession including plenary meetings, negotiations of resolutions, side events, delivering oral statements, participating in informal meetings with partner NGOs, and

106 “2021 Annual Report on Human Rights in Tibet released.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 26 Apr. 2022,https://tchrd.org/2021-annual-report-on-human-rights-situation-in-tibet-released/  
107 “Sucked our marrow: Tibetan language and education rights under Xi Jinping.”Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 11 May 2022, https://tchrd.org/sucked-our-marrow-tibetan-language-and-education-rights-under-xi-jinping/

exploring advocacy initiatives at the UN in Geneva. The TCHRD delegation also held meetings and discussions with several UN special procedures, Working Groups, and human rights officers at the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva, Switzerland<sup>108</sup>.

Participatory Training in Human Rights Education



As part of TCHRD’s annual human rights education program targeted towards Tibetan youth, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy convened a three-day workshop on international human rights mechanisms and their relevance to the human rights situation in Tibet with special focus on civil and political rights and sustainable development. A group of Tibetan refugees pursuing higher education in law, political science, psychology, computer application, journalism, microbiology and commerce in different universities in India took part in a workshop to better understand and advocate for human rights in their

daily lives as well as in their own community. The sessions at the workshop were led by TCHRD executive director, Ms Tsering Tsomo, senior program officer, Ms Tenzin Dawa, Researcher, Mr Nyiwoe and legal officer, Ms Tenzin Nordin. TCHRD also invited two guest speakers including Dr Ilse Köhler-Rollefson, who spoke on “Advancing Sustainable Pastoralism Through Human Rights” and Ms Kavita Srivastava, national secretary of People’s Union for Civil Liberties<sup>109</sup>.

Tibetan Guidebook on UN Human Rights Mechanism



To mark the United Nations Day on 24 October, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy launched the first of its kind Tibetan guidebook on UN Human Rights Mechanisms. The guidebook consisting of five chapters: “Introduction to the United Nations”, “International Human Rights Treaties and their Relevant Bodies”, “Charter-based Mechanisms”, “Treaty-based Mechanisms”, and “Terminologies in Tibetan” is aimed at facilitating easy access for Tibetans in general, and to assist the in the work of Tibetan advocates, human rights activists, and academics. The guidebook has been made available for free download on TCHRD’s website<sup>110</sup>.

108 “TCHRD participates in the 51st UN Human Rights Council session in Geneva.”Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 29 Sep. 2022, <https://tchrd.org/tchrd-participates-in-the-51st-un-human-rights-council-session-in-geneva/>.

109 “Workshop helps Tibetan youth learn about human rights and sustainable development.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 8 Aug. 2022,,<https://tchrd.org/workshop-helps-tibetan-youth-learn-about-human-rights-and-sustainable-development/>

110 “Launch of Tibetan guidebook on UN Human Rights Mechanism.” *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, 24 Oct. 2022, <https://tchrd.org/launch-of-tibetan-guidebook-on-un-human-rights-mechanisms/>.

UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15)



On the sidelines of the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) taking place in Montreal, Canada from 7 to 19 December 2022, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy led by senior program officer, Ms Tenzin Dawa and media/research officer Mr Ngawang Lungtok delivered briefing papers to 17 foreign missions based in New Delhi and also briefed researchers and strategists at think tanks including Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA) and Foundation for Non-violent Alternatives (FNVA). The briefings were aimed

at highlighting the situation of Tibetan pastoral and farming communities in China’s climate mitigation and adaptation policy. A set of recommendations were also submitted to the think tanks and the foreign missions.

World Press Freedom Day



Aimed at promoting freedom, accountability, and transparency of the press in advancing Tibetan democracy, TCHRD organised a hybrid panel discussion titled ‘Role of Media in Advancing Tibetan Democracy’ on the World Press Freedom Day, observed every year on 3 May. The forum brought together activists and members of civil society to discuss the significance of press freedom in advancing democracy in the exile Tibetan community, overcoming the challenges faced by the exile Tibetan media, as well

as the adverse effects of social media algorithms on democratic discourse, and possible solutions. Panellists included media professionals, legislators, activists, digital security experts, and independent researchers with extensive knowledge shared their experiences and opinions on how the media could arbitrate a polarised society, empower and build the capacity of Tibetan journalists, and discussed issues that warrant the attention of the journalists and other stakeholders<sup>111</sup>.

111 “World Press Freedom Day: Panel discussion on the role of media in advancing Tibetan democracy.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 3 May 2022, <https://tchrd.org/world-press-freedom-day-panel-discussion-on-the-role-of-media-in-advancing-tibetan-democracy/>.



#UNFORGOTTEN Campaign on Torture Victims and Survivors



“endangering national security”, and “undermining national unity”, “inciting separatism”, and “disclosing state secrets.”<sup>112</sup>

Human Rights Speaking Tour



In July 2022, TCHRD successfully completed visits to four top law schools in Southern India including National Law School of India University, Christ University, Symbiosis Law School and NALSAR. The speaking tour allowed the TCHRD team to interact and exchange ideas and insights with over 1000 law students on the human rights situation in Tibet.

Tibetan Political Prisoners



Following the launch of Tibetan political prisoners’ database on 10 December, last year, TCHRD has developed partnerships with Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) and Voice of America’s Tibetan program in an effort to highlight and garner the much deserved attention on the plight of Tibetan political prisoners’ in Tibet. Through the VOA’s Tibetan program platform, TCHRD highlights stories of four Tibetan political prisoners’ every month on both VOA and TCHRD’s social media platforms.<sup>113</sup>

112 “TCHRD statement on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.” Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 26 Jun. 2022, <https://tchrd.org/tchrd-statement-on-the-international-day-in-support-of-victims-of-torture/>.  
113 “Tibetan political prisoners.” Voice of America- Tibetan, <https://www.voatibetan.com/z/7108>.

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