

<https://www.savetibet.org/chinese-police-circular-urges-public-to-report-on-loyalty-to-evil-forces-of-dalai-lama/>

Chinese police circular urges public to report on loyalty to 'evil forces' of Dalai Lama *State media attacks Mercedes after second apology on using Dalai Lama quote*

- Chinese police have issued a circular urging the public to inform on people they suspect of being loyal to the Dalai Lama and his "evil forces" across Tibet. According to the Chinese state media, the circular is aimed at deterring the "gangsters" that "the Dalai group uses to spreading its message of separatism."
- The circular on "illegal behavior" was posted on February 7, a month before the politically sensitive March 10 anniversary period, when the Tibet Autonomous Region is closed to foreigners. This year marks a decade since overwhelmingly peaceful protests swept across Tibet in 2008, with many demonstrators calling upon the Chinese government to allow the Dalai Lama to return home.
- Underlining the hostile anti-Dalai Lama message it seeks to send to the world, the Chinese state media also made a harsh critique of the German company Daimler this week despite the auto-maker already apologizing twice to China for using a quote by the Dalai Lama to advertise Mercedes-Benz on Instagram.

In an article about the 22 illegal activities specified in the circular,¹ state media newspaper, the Global Times, made it clear that the political struggle against the Dalai Lama is central to the Beijing leadership's concerns and is carried out on a war footing, saying: "The spread of separatist gangs in Tibet is rampant [...] a campaign against the gangsters would deter off secessionist activities by the Dalai." (Global Times, February 11, 2018).

In a separate article, the Chinese state media published a further attack on Mercedes-Benz' use of a mild general comment by the Dalai Lama on Instagram, saying that by doing so, car company Daimler had "seriously violated China's rights of sovereignty." (Xinhua, February 11, 2018).² Xinhua warned that: "Daimler has tried to undo its wrongdoing by deleting the post on Instagram and issuing an apology, but the damage to its image in the Chinese market is already done."

Matteo Mecacci, President of the International Campaign for Tibet, said: "The circular published in Tibet calling on Tibetans to denounce each other in order to undermine the most revered Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, is a reminder of the totalitarian and extreme rule that the Chinese Communist party continues to impose in Tibet. Only a government consumed by fear and paranoia treats all its citizens as part of its security apparatus. The circular published in Tibet recalls the appeals to the masses

¹ An unofficial translation into English has been published by China Law Translate, and posted on February 11 (2018). The document is entitled: 'Notice of the Tibet Autonomous Region Public Security Department on Reporting Leads on Crimes and violations by Underworld forces' and posted at:

<http://www.chinalawtranslate.com/%E8%A5%BF%E8%97%8F%E8%87%AA%E6%B2%BB%E5%8C%BA%E5%85%AC%E5%AE%89%E5%8E%85%E5%85%B3%E4%BA%8E%E4%B8%BE%E6%8A%A5%E9%BB%91%E6%81%B6%E5%8A%BF%E5%8A%9B%E8%BF%9D%E6%B3%95%E7%8A%AF%E7%BD%AA%E7%BA%BF/?lang=en>

² 'Commentary: Daimler's quote incident a reminder of principle for foreign firms', by Xinhua writer Ren Ke, February 11, 2018

issued by authoritarian regimes in the last century. If companies like Mercedes-Benz and Marriott continue to embrace Communist propaganda - disregarding their own freedom of expression, the opinion of their customers, and international obligations and commitments, they are effectively complicit in these methods and therefore the oppression suffered by the Tibetan people."

The circular on 'Reporting Leads on Crimes and Violations by Underworld Forces' published by the Public Security Bureau in Tibet follows earlier warnings of punishment for Tibetans who even think about the Dalai Lama, including Party officials.³ It was published in the buildup to a particularly sensitive time of year - Tibetan and Chinese New Year coincide in 2018 on Friday, February 16. At a time when many Tibetans and Chinese are travelling to be with families, there is often an emphasis on security matters. The Tibetan New Year period also precedes the anniversary of the March 10 Uprising in 1959, and this year is the tenth anniversary of protests across the plateau from March 10, 2008.

Targeting "underworld forces" that are a "chronic disease that is loathed by the people", the circular states that the public should report monasteries that are "using religion to control, to confuse, to incite, or coerce the masses to resist the Party and government". Consistent with a trend in Tibet of making everyday and often devotional activities illegal, the circular also effectively criminalizes those who seek to encourage the use of the Tibetan language or protect Tibetan culture, calling this a "reactionary and narrow nationalistic idea".

An article in The Global Times citing Wang Xiaobin, a scholar at the Beijing-based China Tibetology Research Center, stated that the circular "echoes the primary task of Tibet, which is to maintain national and ethnical unity." Wang also appeared to acknowledge that Tibet support groups ensure prominence of the issue worldwide, saying: "There are groups in China that are closely connected with the Dalai group, and help each other at home and abroad. They challenge the Chinese government using ingenious methods and pose a huge threat to national interests."

The circular, published by the Public Security Bureau of the Tibet Autonomous Region, details 22 illegal activities the bureau wants the public to report, with a specific emphasis on the Dalai Lama in at least three of the points, and a warning about the "foreign hostile forces" loyal to him. Illegal behavior specified includes support for the Dalai Lama's moderate 'Middle Way' approach that calls for respect for a genuine autonomy for Tibet while acknowledging China's sovereignty.

The Global Times also quoted "a professor who researches religious studies at Public Security University of China, surnamed Dai", saying: "Collusion with criminal gangs is a tactic the Dalai group uses to spreading its message of separatism. These kinds of gangsters were involved in the Lhasa rebellion in the 1950s [the March 1959 Uprising] and the violent accident [sic] in 2008 in Tibet."⁴

The Chinese state media represents the wave of overwhelmingly peaceful protests that swept across Tibet from March 10, 2008, as "one violent riot", referring solely to events of March 14, 2008, in Lhasa. The Chinese government engaged in a comprehensive cover-up of the torture, disappearances and killings that took place across Tibet after the protests combined with a virulent propaganda offensive against the exiled Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama.

The new circular escalates this offensive, in the context of a tightening crackdown against even mild and moderate expressions of Tibetan identity in the buildup to the March anniversary period. The circular also effectively criminalizes individuals who speak about issues such as environmental protection and "folk

³ International Campaign for Tibet report, 'Communist Party officials punished for supporting Dalai Lama', January 28, 2016, <https://www.savetibet.org/communist-party-officials-punished-for-supporting-dalai-lama/>

⁴ The Global Times, 'Police asks Tibetans for Dalai Lama tips' by Liu Caiyu, February 11, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1089209.shtml>

culture" by labeling them as "'spokespersons' of the Dalai clique and hostile foreign [non-mainland] forces."

Analysing CCP statements at the 19th Party Congress in Beijing in October (2017) compared to previous high-level meetings, ChinaFile Senior Editor Jessica Batke, an expert on China's domestic political and social affairs, concluded that: "In the context of the ongoing and overwhelming securitization of both Tibet and Xinjiang [...] It appears that the PRC's perceived security needs have finally trumped the CCP's historical attachment to the idea that it supports and represents all the country's ethnic groups equally. Thus this report [from the 2017 Party Congress] may signal the point at which even nominal support for protecting ethnic minority culture begins to fade away, being subsumed by the notion of the 'Chinese race'."⁵

⁵ Jessica Batke, 'Party All the Time: Governance and Society in the New Era,' China Leadership Monitor No 55, Winter 2018, <https://www.hoover.org/research/party-all-time-governance-and-society-new-era>