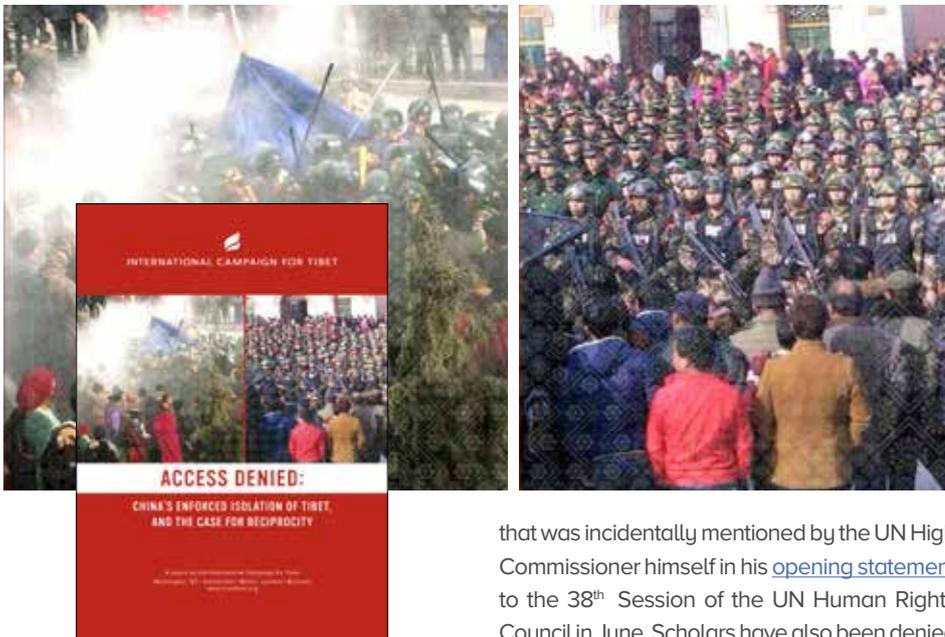


## NEW ICT REPORT REVEALS CHINA'S STRATEGIES OF WEAPONIZING ACCESS TO TIBET

A NEW REPORT BY THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET CALLS FOR A MORE ROBUST INTERNATIONAL APPROACH ON TIBET, BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCITY AND AN EMERGING AWARENESS THAT CHINA'S INCREASING AUTHORITARIAN INFLUENCE UNDER XI JINPING HAS EXTENDED BEYOND THE BORDERS OF THE PRC, THREATENING TO SUBVERT AND RESHAPE OUR DEMOCRACIES.



The report, *'Access Denied: China's enforced isolation of Tibet, and the case for reciprocity'*, documents China's systematic efforts to restrict access to Tibet, in order to ensure its absolute control over the global narrative on the Tibetan issue. Today, while domestic tourists are flowing to the roof of the world, foreigners, and in particular United Nation officials, diplomats and journalists, are indeed almost without exception denied access, other than on strictly controlled official tours—an issue

that was incidentally mentioned by the UN High Commissioner himself in his [opening statement](#) to the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council in June. Scholars have also been denied visas because of their writing, and international journalists thrown out of the country because they were critical of China's policies in Tibet, while Tibetans have been punished for passing information outside Tibet. Meanwhile, the report also demonstrates that an increasing number of Chinese official delegations have been sent abroad to manipulate and influence perceptions of target audiences in Western countries on Tibet and the Dalai Lama.

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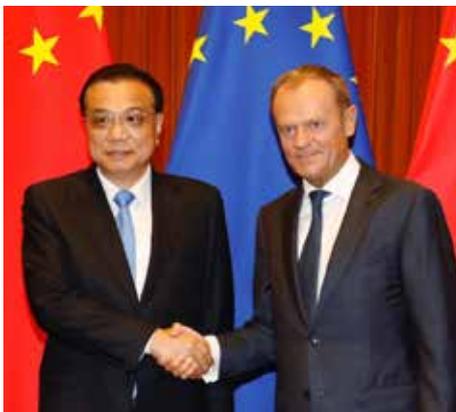
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This enforced isolation of Tibet, which allows the Chinese government to continue oppressing Tibetans without accountability, matters for human rights in Tibet, but also highlights a strong lack of reciprocity in the EU-China relationship: Chinese delegations of diplomats or journalists indeed face no such restrictions as those imposed on EU citizens in Tibet, and enjoy free and open access to the entire territories of EU member states all year round. Combined with China's growing influence in Europe, which has pushed some Member States to embrace Chinese interests in recent months, this asymmetry poses a significant challenge to liberal democracy as well as Europe's values and interests.

In recent months, the principle of reciprocity has increasingly been invoked by EU leaders, including French President Macron during his first official visit to China in January 2018; while these comments appeared to focus mainly on trade, ICT calls on the EU and its Member States to follow-up on the appeal of the European Parliament (in its 2015 report on EU-China relations), that "*steps be taken to enforce the principle of reciprocity*" and to extend this notion to the protection of fundamental rights, including the freedom of movement and information of EU citizens in China and Tibet. In this regard, they could for example be inspired by the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, a bipartisan bill introduced in the U.S. Congress, and which if adopted would deny access to the United States any Chinese officials responsible for administering travel policies to Tibetan areas until China cancels the discriminatory restrictions placed on Americans who wish to enter Tibet.

## EU AND CHINA HOLD THEIR ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE AND SUMMIT

ON 9-10 JULY 2018, THE EUROPEAN UNION HELD THE 36<sup>TH</sup> ROUND OF ITS HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE WITH CHINA IN BEIJING. IT WAS FOLLOWED ON 16-17 JULY BY THE 20<sup>TH</sup> EU-CHINA SUMMIT, ALSO IN BEIJING.



Li Keqiang, Prime Minister of China and Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, at the EU-China Summit in Beijing on 16 July 2018.

This year's Human Rights Dialogue was held at a particularly significant time, as it marked the third anniversary of the arrest and detention of more than 300 Chinese human rights lawyers and defenders beginning on 9 July 2015.

During the meeting, the EU expressed

its concerns about several human rights developments in China, such as cases of arbitrary detention, the system of political re-education camps in Xinjiang and the implementation of China's Foreign NGO Activity Management Law, and called for the release of a number of wrongfully detained human rights defenders. With regards to Tibet specifically, it asked for the release "*of writers and religious figures who face criminal charges or have been imprisoned for exercising their right to freedom of expression, including Tashi Wangchuk and Tashi Dorje.*"

At the Summit held a few days later, the EU (represented by European Council President Donald Tusk and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker) and China (represented by Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang) further discussed bilateral trade, investment relations and foreign and security issues, and agreed to further develop the EU-China strategic partnership. EU and

Chinese leaders also adopted a joint statement including a statement on climate change and clean energy. Ahead of the Summit, the Chair of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights and 23 human rights organisations, including ICT, had called on EU leaders to use the high-level meeting to press China for concrete improvements in the human rights situation in China and Tibet, including in particular the release of jailed human rights defenders.

### MORE ON THIS:

- [EEAS Official Press Release after the 36<sup>th</sup> round of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue](#)
- [Joint NGO letter ahead of the 20<sup>th</sup> EU-China Summit](#)
- [Letter from the Chair of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights ahead of the 20<sup>th</sup> EU-China Summit](#)
- [Joint statement of the 20<sup>th</sup> EU-China Summit](#)

## ICT PRESIDENT RAISES TIBET WITH UN AND EU OFFICIALS

IN JUNE, ICT PRESIDENT MATTEO MECACCI WAS IN GENEVA TO ATTEND A HIGH-LEVEL MEETING BETWEEN THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND ICT CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD RICHARD GERE. WHILE IN EUROPE, HE PAID A SHORT VISIT TO BRUSSELS, WHERE HE MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM DIFFERENT NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS.



ICT President Matteo Mecacci presenting ICT's report on reciprocal access to Tibet to members of the European Parliament's Tibet Interest Group on 27 June.

The two-day visit (27 and 28 June) included a meeting with a representative of the Belgian Foreign Affairs Ministry, the former President of the European Economic and Social Committee and longtime friend of Tibet Henri Malosse, a representative of the Austrian Permanent Representation (in view of the start of the Austrian EU Presidency that started on 1 July), the Vice-Chair of the European Subcommittee on Human Rights, Cristian Dan Preda, as well as members of the European Parliament's Tibet Interest Group. In all these meetings Matteo Mecacci raised the issues of the deterioration of the human rights situation in Tibet, the problem of access to Tibet for foreign observers and the lack of reciprocity between the EU and China, and discussed ways to increase international cooperation on Tibet, in particular between the US and the EU and its Member States.

The President of ICT concluded his visit to

Europe with a meeting with the EU Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion and Belief outside the EU, Ján Figel'. They discussed the continuing lack of religious freedom in Tibet – a subject regularly raised by the European Parliament - and its relevance to Tibetan Buddhists worldwide.



The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Al Hussein and ICT Chairman of the Board, Richard Gere, in Geneva on 26 June.

## MASS MIGRATION PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS CONTESTED NOMADS' RESETTLEMENT POLICIES IN TIBET

ON 19 JUNE 2018, CHINA ANNOUNCED THE DISPLACEMENT OF OVER A THOUSAND TIBETANS FROM A NATURE RESERVE IN NORTHERN TIBET UNDER THE PRETEXT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION -AN APPROACH INCREASINGLY CONTESTED IN CHINA AND BEYOND.

In what the Chinese authorities describe as the “first high-altitude resettlement project for ‘ecological migrants’ in Tibet”, more than 1,000 Tibetans have been moved out of the vast Changtang (Chinese: Qiangtang) area according to the Chinese state media, which published images of elderly Tibetans boarding yellow coaches to take them to a resettlement encampment in Lhasa. The Qiangtang National Nature Reserve is one of three major nature reserves stretching across the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and Qinghai.

This development is part of a new move by the Chinese authorities to create hundreds of national parks on the Tibetan plateau -contingent upon the removal of Tibetans from the land- in the name of environmental conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation. But the approach, imposed from the top-down and ignoring the concerns and expertise of local people, runs counter to a growing scientific consensus in China and beyond that indigenous stewardship and herd mobility are essential to the health of the rangelands and help to mitigate climate change.

Moreover, while some of the Tibetans

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## CHINA FORCES YOUNG TIBETAN MONKS OUT OF MONASTERY

**YOUNG TIBETAN MONKS WERE RECENTLY COMPELLED TO LEAVE ONE OF THE BIGGEST MONASTERIES IN EASTERN TIBET, AS PART OF A DRIVE BY THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT TO REPLACE MONASTIC EDUCATION WITH SECULAR SCHOOLING THAT EMPHASIZES COMMUNIST PARTY PROPAGANDA.**



*Images circulating on social media show a large group of boys in lay clothing accompanied by monks leaving Sershul monastery in Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan.*

According to a recent [report](#) by Radio Free Asia (RFA) and [confirmed](#) by ICT, Chinese authorities have been forcing young Buddhist monks under 15 to leave the Sershul monastery – the largest Gelugpa monastery in the Tibetan area of Kham – and join government-run schools, with threats to close the monastery in case of noncompliance.

Traditionally, Tibetan monks enter monasteries, which are important centres of culture and education, as novices at a young age. While Communist Party work teams first began preventing young monks from joining monasteries in the mid-1990s, the level of enforcement has varied from

monastery to monastery; according to ICT's sources, the effort at Sershul is happening in other Tibetan areas, and is of deep concern to Tibetans.

The move reveals the Chinese government's continuous efforts to restrict the size and influence of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, traditionally a focus of Tibetan cultural and national identity, and to influence a new generation growing up in Tibet by shaping Tibetan Buddhism to the dictates of the Communist Party.

It follows further restrictions imposed by the Chinese authorities on the freedom of religion of Tibetans over the last few months,

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relocated from the Changtang may welcome relocation to an area with facilities in Lhasa, there has been no indication of free, prior and informed consent of the relocated Tibetans, nor of the allocation of an adequate compensation, both of which are required under international law for evictions to be legitimate. Given the repressive policies of the Chinese authorities in Tibet, and past observations with regard to relocations of Tibetan herders and nomads, it is highly unlikely that their rights have been respected.

The relocation of Tibetans from Qiangtang National Nature Reserve follows a [controversial decision](#) a year ago to give the bordering area of Hoh Xil (Tibetan: Achen Gangyap) nature reserve UNESCO World Heritage status, despite concern about the displacement of Tibetan nomads from their pastures. Last year, Tibetan herders from a Tibetan area in Qinghai (Amdo) also made a rare and courageous [appeal](#) to the Chinese authorities after being banned from their traditional summer grazing grounds, saying that the orders were illegal under Chinese law.

including a [ban](#) on Tibetan monks who studied in India from teaching Buddhism to residents of Lithang county, in the Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan, and [unprecedented restrictions](#) for the Saga Dawa – the holy month for Tibetan Buddhists. As the religious festival began on 16 May, the authorities in Chamdo (Chinese: Changdu) in the Tibet Autonomous Region for example circulated an order prohibiting families from engaging in any of the religious and devotional practices – a deeply affecting decision for Tibetan families, as devotional practices and altruistic behavior are particularly important during Saga Dawa.

## ‘DESTRUCTION, COMMERCIALIZATION, FAKE REPLICAS’: NEW REPORT ON LHASA AS UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE MEETS

A NEW ICT REPORT DEMONSTRATES HOW LHASA’S UNIQUE AND PRECIOUS CULTURAL HERITAGE IS AT RISK AS CHINA FAILS TO UPHOLD ITS RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION.



*This image of the blaze at the holy Jokhang Temple on 17 February 2018, was captured on social media and circulated online before Tibetans were warned not to send news of the fire outside of Tibet.*

*‘Destruction, commercialization, fake replicas’* highlights that since the iconic Potala Palace and other significant buildings were recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site, termed as the ‘Potala Palace Historic Ensemble’, dozens of historic buildings have been destroyed and replaced with fake ‘Tibetan’-style architecture, completely at odds with the UNESCO World Heritage spirit. Official Chinese planning documents obtained by ICT confirm that this is set to continue with the remaining historic buildings, which number around 50 as new construction continues at a staggering rate. Four months after a major fire at the holy Jokhang Temple in the heart of the city, once the centre of Tibetan Buddhism and with a pivotal role in Tibetan civilization, the Chinese government also continues

blocking access to the site, and may be covering up substantial damage with inappropriate repair work. But in a political context of total surveillance and in which the protection of Tibetan culture has been described by authorities as a “reactionary and narrow nationalistic idea,” Tibetans are likely to be fearful of being involved or speaking out about heritage issues.

The threat to the UNESCO World Heritage ‘Potala Palace Historic Ensemble’ is linked to a dramatic increase in Chinese domestic tourism and a rapidly expanding infrastructure in which Lhasa is a centre of a new network of roads, railways and airports with dual military and civilian use, reflecting the region’s strategic significance to the Chinese government.

The report, which was published in advance of a meeting of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Bahrain where the state of conservation in Lhasa was discussed, called on the UN agency to urge the Chinese government to adopt an authentic conservation approach to preserve what remains. It also urged the Committee to press for the active engagement of Tibetan artisans and experts in conservation efforts, “seeking to revitalize rather than museumize private and public Tibetan spaces.”



*This picture, which was taken before the Jokhang fire in February, shows the ‘Tibetan-style’ streetlights outside the temple.*

## POLITICAL PRISONER FOCUS

### TASHI WANGCHUK SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS IN PRISON

DESPITE CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY SEVERAL GOVERNMENTS AND UN EXPERTS ABOUT HIS DETENTION, TIBETAN LANGUAGE RIGHTS ADVOCATE TASHI WANGCHUK WAS SENTENCED ON 22 MAY TO FIVE YEARS' IMPRISONMENT ON CHARGES OF "INCITING SEPARATISM."

Tashi Wangchuk, 33, was arrested in early 2016 solely for his peaceful expression of dissenting views on Chinese language and education policies, which he had made in an interview published by the New York Times in November 2015. His trial on 4 January 2018 fell far short of international due process standards and was clearly politically motivated. In a tweet posted on 18 June, Tashi Wangchuk's lawyer Liang Xiaojun indicated their plans to appeal the wrongful conviction.

The sentence, handed down by a court in Yushu, Qinghai, signals China's harsh and extreme approach to Tibetan culture and the criminalisation of moderate, peaceful efforts within Chinese law to protect the use of Tibetan language. It is also likely intended to be a strong warning to other Tibetans about speaking to journalists.

Following the announcement of the verdict, a number of governments and parliamentarians worldwide -including the European Union, France, the German Commissioner for Human Rights, the Chair of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights and the French Senate's Tibet Group- have issued statements in support of the young Human Rights Defender. On 6 June, six United



Nations human rights experts also issued a [statement](#) condemning the five-year jail sentence, urging the Chinese authorities "to comply with their international human rights commitments, to grant Mr. Wangchuk immediate release and accord him an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations." ICT has welcomed these statements and will continue to work to draw attention to the gross violation of Tashi Wangchuk's right to freedom of expression and to obtain his release.

### CHINESE DISSIDENT'S WIDOW LIU XIA ALLOWED TO LEAVE CHINA AFTER YEARS OF HOUSE ARREST

ON 10 JULY, AFTER EIGHT YEARS UNDER HOUSE ARREST AND DAYS BEFORE THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH IN PRISON OF HER HUSBAND CHINESE DISSIDENT AND NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATE LIU XIAOBO, CHINESE POET LIU XIA WAS FINALLY ALLOWED TO LEAVE CHINA FOR GERMANY, WHERE SHE WILL BE ABLE TO BE TREATED FOR HER SEVERE DEPRESSION.



Liu Xia smiles as she arrives at the Helsinki International Airport, Finland, on 10 July 2018. (Photo: Lehtikuva/Jussi Nukari via Reuters)

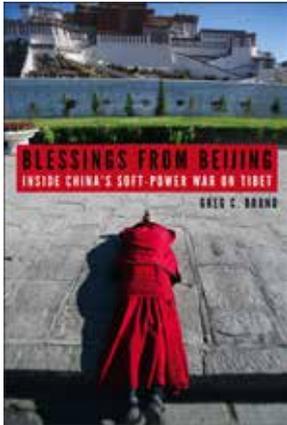
The good news came weeks after German Chancellor Angela Merkel raised Liu's case directly with Chinese President Xi Jinping, during a visit to Beijing earlier this year, and one day after European and Chinese officials held a human rights dialogue in Beijing.

ICT wishes her all the best in her new life of freedom in Europe!

#### MORE ON THIS:

- [How Germany Won Freedom for the Widow of China's Most Famous Dissident](#), The New York Times, 11 July 2018.

## READING SUGGESTION



### **BLESSINGS FROM BEIJING: INSIDE CHINA'S SOFT-POWER WAR ON TIBET** BY GREG C. BRUNO

As we approach the sixtieth anniversary of China's 1959 invasion of Tibet—and the subsequent creation of the Tibetan exile community—the question of the diaspora's survival looms large. Beijing's foreign policy has grown more adventurous, particularly since the post-Olympic expansion of 2008. As the pressure mounts, Tibetan refugee families that have made their homes outside China—in the mountains of Nepal, the jungles of India, or the cold concrete houses high above the Dalai Lama's monastery in Dharamsala—are migrating once again.

Blessings from Beijing untangles the chains that tie Tibetans to China and examines the political, social, and economic pressures that are threatening to destroy Tibet's refugee communities. Journalist Greg Bruno has spent nearly two decades living and working in Tibetan areas. Bruno journeys to the front lines of this fight: to the high Himalayas of Nepal, where Chinese agents pay off Nepali villagers to inform on Tibetan asylum seekers; to the monasteries of southern India, where pro-China monks wish the Dalai Lama dead; to Asia's meditation caves, where lost souls ponder the fine line between love and war; and to the streets of New York City, where the next generation of refugees strategizes about how to survive China's relentless assault. But Bruno's reporting does not stop at well-worn tales of Chinese meddling and political intervention. It goes beyond them—and within them—to explore how China's strategy is changing the Tibetan exile community forever.

**EDITOR:** ForeEdge

**PUBLICATION DATE:** April 2018

Click [here](#) to buy this book.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### • 10-13 AUGUST 2018:

China's review by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

### • 6 NOVEMBER 2018:

China's third cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the United Nations Human Rights Council

### • 16-23 SEPTEMBER 2018:

Visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland (more information on his schedule at <https://www.dalailama.com/schedule>)

## SWEDEN CONDEMNS TIBETAN FOR ESPIONAGE, HIGHLIGHTING PRESSURES ON EXILE COMMUNITIES

**IN THE FIRST KNOWN CASE OF A WESTERN GOVERNMENT BRINGING CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST A TIBETAN ACCUSED OF ESPIONAGE, SWEDEN HAS CONDEMNED A TIBETAN MAN TO 22 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR SPYING ON TIBETANS IN EXILE FOR THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT.**

Despite pleading innocent, the 49-year-old man, identified by several media reports as Dorjee Gyantsan, was found guilty of collecting information on the identities, political views, and travel of fellow Tibetans living in Sweden, which he was then paid to pass to Chinese intelligence officials in Poland and Finland. The Södertörn district court, near Stockholm, said in its verdict that the culprit had "carried out an extensive operation that put people of Tibetan origin in Sweden and their families in Tibet at significant risk".

The unmasking of this man, which has sent a chill through the Tibetan community in Sweden, highlights a common pattern among exile Tibetan and Uighur communities worldwide as the Chinese authorities extend their reach beyond the PRC, involving increasing pressure on exiles from Tibet and Xinjiang to silence any criticism of China and to muzzle political protest. Even in exile, Tibetans are indeed under frequent surveillance, including within their communities, and levels of distrust and suspicion can be high in certain circumstances. If they participate in peaceful demonstrations against the Chinese government, or speak out in international media, relatives inside Tibet can be threatened, called in for questioning, or even imprisoned. "We know they can do anything to our families," one Tibetan in exile in Europe told ICT. "They have complete power over them while we are here, and we feel helpless."