

## TIBETANS, UYGHURS, HONG KONGERS AND CHINESE DISSIDENTS HOLD DEMONSTRATION IN BRUSSELS ON CHINA'S NATIONAL DAY

ON 1 OCTOBER, THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA CELEBRATED THE 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDATION IN POMP WITH A NUMBER OF EVENTS IN BEIJING, LHASA AND IN ITS OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIONS WORLDWIDE. BUT AFTER 70 YEARS OF SUBJUGATION AND OPPRESSION, THE TIBETAN PEOPLE HAD ABSOLUTELY NO CAUSE FOR REJOICING.



Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hong Kongers and human rights activists walking hand in hand in Brussels on 1 October. The protest was jointly organized by the World Uyghur Congress, the International Campaign for Tibet, the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization and the Uyghur and Tibetan communities of Belgium. (Photo: ICT/eProd).

On 29 September, more than 4,000 people were marshaled outside the Potala Palace in Tibet's Capital of Lhasa for the official event marking the anniversary. Women wore traditional Tibetan dress adorned with red sashes emblazoned with Communist Party slogans and with red hearts painted on their faces. Communist Party slogans and Chinese flags were everywhere—and in a particularly disturbing placement that

shocked even Tibetans familiar with Beijing's excesses, a banner advocating that the Communist Party should prosper for 10,000 years was [hung above the entrance of the Jokhang Temple](#), the religious and cultural heart of Lhasa and one of Buddhism's most sacred sites. Virtually no place in Tibet was exempt from the celebrations, with monks in Chamdo (in the Tibetan Autonomous Region)

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singing songs of praise to “the motherland,” and nomadic children in Ngaba (in China’s Sichuan province) [pictured with red flags](#).

These major celebrations in Tibet, which focused on telling the story of the Communists” and on touting China’s “70 years of progress in Tibet,” reflect China’s increasingly systematic measures of instilling the “red gene” across Tibetan society, underpinned by efforts to obliterate Tibetan religious and cultural identity.

For Tibetans around the world though, the anniversary was no cause for rejoicing, as it marked 70 years of subjugation and oppression of their people by the People’s Republic of China, and a number of demonstrations were organized on this occasion. In Brussels in particular, Tibetans joined forces with Uyghurs and Chinese dissidents to commemorate the victims of the Chinese Communist Party’s repression over the 70 years it has ruled the country, and to call for an end of China’s gross human rights abuses. The demonstration began near the European Parliament with speeches from political figures -including member and former President of the European Economic and Social Committee Henri Malosse, Belgian MP Samuel Cogolati, as well as Members of the European Parliament Phil Bennion, Raphaël Glücksmann, Martin Horwood, Mikuláš Peksa and Molly Scott Cato- who all expressed their support for the struggle of Tibetans, Uyghurs and all those in China yearning for their basic rights. Participants then marched through the European Union district to the Schuman Roundabout, where representatives from the participating communities - including Ray Wong, a leader of the 2014 Hong Kong’s pro-democracy Umbrella Movement - and NGOs took the floor to call on the international community, and in particular on the new EU leadership, to hold the Chinese government accountable for its actions.

**MORE ON THIS ISSUE:**

- [Statement of the International Campaign for Tibet on the 70th anniversary of the PRC](#)

## CHINA STEPS UP ITS ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL THE DALAI LAMA’S SUCCESSION

**CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY AUTHORITIES HAVE STEPPED UP EFFORTS TO CONTROL THE SUCCESSION OF THE DALAI LAMA, BY HOSTING THEIR FIRST MAJOR TRAINING ON REINCARNATION INVOLVING MONKS FROM PROMINENT TIBETAN MONASTERIES.**



The Dalai Lama at a Long Life Ceremony in the main temple in Dharamsala, India, on 5 July 2019. (Photo: Tenzin Choejor)

According to Chinese state media, around 100 Tibetan Buddhist monks from 73 monasteries attended a “training session on reincarnation for a living Buddha” that started on 23 August. They studied government “management of the reincarnation system” and the Communist Party’s approved version of history and rituals for reincarnation.

Signaling their determination to exclude the Dalai Lama from playing any role in his own succession, a senior official at the training session said the reincarnation system is “never a religious-only issue or a living Buddha’s personal right” but “an important representation of the Communist Party of China’s strategies and policies in the region.” The statement can also be seen as a blunt warning to any Tibetans loyal to the Dalai Lama.

At the same time, the Chinese-installed Panchen Lama Gyaltzen Norbu, who is being used by Beijing to gain control over Tibetan Buddhism, has been on an “inspection tour” of monasteries and villages in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).

For several years, the Chinese government has [claimed that the Dalai Lama’s eventual reincarnation must comply with Chinese law](#) - a statement that does not only ignores Tibetans’ centuries-long history of selecting the Dalai Lama without foreign interference but also violates Tibetans’ fundamental right to religious freedom. In order to counter China’s attempts to interfere in the issue, lawmakers in the United States have introduced a bill that would make it official US policy that the succession or reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan Buddhist leaders is exclusively a religious issue that the Tibetan Buddhist community decide upon. Under the bill, which builds on the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 (TPA), a landmark legislation that enshrined support for Tibet in US law, any Chinese officials who attempt to interfere in this process could be subject to targeted sanctions.

**MORE ON THIS ISSUE:**

- [China steps up discredited attempts to control Dalai Lama’s succession](#)
- [New bill will sanction Chinese officials for interfering in Dalai Lama reincarnation, update Tibetan Policy Act](#)



## TIBET AT THE 42<sup>ND</sup> UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL SESSION

**DURING THE 42<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, CHINA WAS ONCE AGAIN CRITICIZED FOR ITS GROSS VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHTS OF THE TIBETAN PEOPLE.**



ICT Germany's Executive Director Kai Müller speaking at the side-event to the 42<sup>nd</sup> UN Human Rights session in the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 12 September.

The session, which took place in Geneva between 9-27 September, opened with an address from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, in which she updated the Council about her office's activities and expressed concern about human rights violations in a number of countries. Regrettably, the High Commissioner again failed to mention China and Tibet in her statement, despite ongoing systematic and widespread abuses.

Nevertheless Germany, France, the Czech Republic and Sweden specifically referred to Tibet in their statements during the General Debate on item 4 (Human rights situations that require the Council's attention). Finland, [on behalf of the European Union](#) also called on China to uphold its national and international obligations, and to respect human rights, "including the rights of persons belonging to minorities especially in Xinjiang and Tibet."

Once again ICT actively participated in the

session and delivered three oral statements on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights – [one under the General Debate on item 4](#), another focusing on [the arbitrary detention of Tibetans](#), and one [on disappeared Tibetans, in particular the 11<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama](#). This latest statement forced China to react and use its right of reply, during which the Chinese delegate reiterated that Gedhun Choekyi Nyima is living a "normal life" and "has nothing to do with the so-called enforced disappearance" – a shallow claim as China continues to refuse access to him to verify his whereabouts and wellbeing.

On 12 September, ICT Germany's Executive Director Kai Müller participated in a side-event on the socio-economic and cultural rights of Tibet organized by the Society for Threatened Peoples. He outlined how China's top-down development policy in Tibet, in contrast to a right-based approach, undermines Tibetan knowledge, practices and traditional beliefs as well as sustainable and ecological initiatives.

## UK LAWMAKER INTRODUCES LEGISLATION INSPIRED BY US RECIPROCAL ACCESS TO TIBET ACT

**IN JULY, A UK LAWMAKER INTRODUCED A BILL IN THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT CALLING ON CHINESE OFFICIALS TO GIVE BRITISH DIPLOMATS, JOURNALISTS AND ORDINARY CITIZENS ACCESS TO TIBET OR BE DENIED ENTRY TO THE UK.**

The proposed law, submitted in the House of Commons on 23 July by Conservative Party MP Tim Loughton, mirrors the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act that was [passed unanimously by the US Congress](#) last year, which aims to address China's exclusion of American journalists, diplomats and citizens from Tibet.

In recent years, the Chinese government has stepped up efforts to thwart scrutiny of its human rights abuses in Tibet by restricting access to the region to foreigners. This is in total contravention of the principle of reciprocity - as Chinese citizens, including journalists and diplomats, are free to travel anywhere in Western countries. This is documented in the ICT report [Access Denied: China's enforced isolation of Tibet, and the case for reciprocity](#). "It is time for us, in Europe and the United Kingdom, to take a similar stand to show categorically to China that its continued abuses in Tibet do not go unnoticed or unappreciated, and that we will tolerate them no more," Tim Loughton said as he [submitted the bill](#).

Loughton's move follows a [Canadian Senate motion](#) introduced in March by Senator Thanh Hai Ngo that called for Canada to receive reciprocal diplomatic access to Tibet without limitations. These initiatives in Canada and the UK show that reciprocal access to Tibet—which [went through a process in the US Congress for years](#) before it was passed—is a key way that governments can hold China accountable for its restrictive policies in Tibet. ICT continues to encourage lawmakers around the world to push for the adoption of similar legislation.

## NEW EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS APPOINTED

AFTER DAYS OF TALKS, NEW EUROPEAN LEADERS WERE APPOINTED IN THE SUMMER.



Josep Borrell meets the Dalai Lama in May 2006 during the Tibetan spiritual leader's visit to the European Parliament in Brussels. (Photo: European Union 2006 – EP)

Belgium's Prime Minister, Charles Michel, was elected new President of the European Council, while German defense Minister, Ursula von der Leyen, became the first woman elected to lead the European Commission. Josep Borrell Fontelles, an experienced Spanish diplomat, was nominated as the new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Interestingly, the new EU diplomacy chief has already [visited Tibet in 2006 when he was President of the European Parliament](#). Following that trip, he declared that despite religious freedom in Tibet was being respected "on the surface," he remained concerned about the Tibetan issue. That same year Borrell met with the Dalai Lama and he reiterated the European Parliament's commitment to support a peaceful, non-violent solution in Tibet. He also called on China to grant autonomy to Tibet.

ICT congratulates Mr. Borrell for his nomination; if confirmed by the European Parliament's vote in October, ICT plans to work with him, and hopes that he will actively promote the rights of Tibetans during exchanges with the Chinese government.

## TIBETAN ACTIVIST WHOSE LAMA UNCLE DIED IN CHINESE PRISON CALLS FOR JUSTICE AT US RELIGIOUS FREEDOM EVENT

THE TIBET ISSUE RECEIVED THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF ATTENTION AT THE SECOND MINISTERIAL TO ADVANCE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM THAT TOOK PLACE IN MID-JULY.

Addressing the Ministerial – hosted by the US State Department to bring together stakeholders from around the globe working to promote international religious freedom – on 18 July, US Vice-President Mike Pence referred to the plight of Tibetan Buddhists. He highlighted the case of the Panchen Lama, who was

The Ministerial also featured an important testimony from Nyima Lhamo, the niece of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche - a revered Tibetan lama [who died mysteriously in a Chinese prison in July 2015](#). Amid allegations of torture, the authorities did not conduct an autopsy on his body, which was cremated only four days after his death. Speaking



Nyima Lhamo speaks to President Donald Trump at a meeting in the Oval Office of the White House on 17 July 2019. (Photo: Tibet Post International). [Click here](#) to watch the video

kidnapped by Chinese authorities after he was recognized by the Dalai Lama in 1995 and has not been seen in public since. Two days earlier, the Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, took part in a discussion on religious freedom challenges in China. She said that unless the international community actively challenges China over its treatment of Tibetans and others undergoing persecution, it will lack credibility when raising issues in other parts of the world.

at the Ministerial on 17 July, Nyima Lhamo - who fled Tibet in 2016 to tell the world about Chinese repression in her homeland - delivered a strong and emotional account of her uncle's case, and urged the governments of the world to hold China accountable for his death.

Nyima Lhamo also had the rare opportunity to directly address the US President Donald Trump in the Oval Office with other survivors of religious persecution participating in the ministerial. She asked President Trump to support the Tibetan people and to press for the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet. Trump thanked her and requested she "say hello" - presumably referencing to the Dalai Lama.

[Click here](#) to watch a video recording of Nyima Lhamo's full testimony at the Ministerial on Religious Freedom.



## NEW 'SOCIAL SECURITY' CARDS IN TIBET EXPAND CHINA'S CONTROL OVER TIBETANS' LIVES

CHINESE AUTHORITIES ACROSS THE TIBET AUTONOMOUS REGION (TAR) ANNOUNCED THIS SUMMER THE ROLLOUT OF SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS, PROMPTING FEARS THAT THESE COULD BE USED TO STRENGTHEN THE GRIP OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY-STATE OVER TIBETANS' LIVES.



Social security cards have already been distributed to inhabitants of a number of Tibetan cities, including in Lhasa since August 2018. (Photo: Chinese state media)

According to Chinese state media, about 2.7 million cards have already been distributed across the TAR, with a total of three million to be issued by the end of the year. Covering a wide range of functions, including online and mobile banking, settlement, medical insurance payments, city card and others, the card's official aim is to make inhabitants' lives easier by bringing together their electronic data in one place, replacing the need for other cards for medical, credit and other purposes.

But the International Campaign for Tibet is concerned that these cards will further deepen Communist Party-state control over Tibetans' lives. Indeed, the new system allows for the state's intrusive collection of every fragment of data about Tibetans and the use of this data to directly punish individuals with penalties such as termination of employment or pension, torture, imprisonment or worse.

Combined with China's social credit scheme, to be rolled out across the PRC by 2020, it will surely have a strong political application under Beijing's aims of ensuring Tibetans comply with the policies of the Chinese Communist Party.

## UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS ASK CHINA FOR INFORMATION ABOUT NINE TIBETANS IMPRISONED FOR CELEBRATING THE DALAI LAMA'S BIRTHDAY

FIVE UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS HAVE WRITTEN TO THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT REQUESTING INFORMATION ABOUT A GROUP OF TIBETANS ARRESTED FOR CELEBRATING THE DALAI LAMA'S 80<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY.

In December 2016, nine Tibetans from Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) in the Tibetan region of Amdo (which China considers part of its Sichuan province) were [sentenced to prison for their involvement in celebrating the Dalai Lama's 80th birthday](#) in July 2015, after organizing outdoor picnics and sharing information on social media. Little is known about their trials but reports suggest that the charges against them were likely related to 'separatism,' that they were denied legal assistance and that their families were not notified of the

criminal proceedings against them.

In an official letter dated 10 May 2019, recently made public, five United Nations Special Rapporteurs of the United Nations – the Special Rapporteurs in the field of cultural rights; on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; on the situation of human rights defenders; on minority issues; and on freedom of religion or belief – have voiced their concerns about China's disregard of the judicial due process and criminalization of

Tibetan religious expression in these cases, as well as its frequent use of charges of "separatism" to violate Tibetans' basic rights.

The International Campaign for Tibet is grateful to these five UN Special Rapporteurs for taking the significant step of publicizing the absurd charges against the nine Tibetans, and pressuring China to account for their arrests and current conditions.

Click [here](#) to read the letter of the UN Special Rapporteurs.

## POLITICAL PRISONER FOCUS

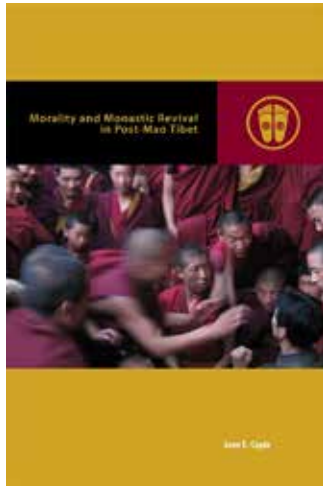
### LOBSANG DORJE



**LOBSANG DORJE, A TIBETAN MONK FROM THE INFLUENTIAL KIRTI MONASTERY, WAS SENTENCED ON 3 SEPTEMBER TO THREE YEARS IN PRISON, AFTER BEING HELD INCOMMUNICADO IN DETENTION FOR MORE THAN ONE YEAR.**

According to two Kirti monks living in exile in India, it is not known why Lobsang Dorje, who was arrested in mid-July 2018, was imprisoned, although they believe it may be linked to his contacts with people outside Tibet. Chinese authorities have taken an extreme approach in blocking information flow and preventing news about Tibet from reaching the outside world. As a result, Tibetans in Tibet can be imprisoned for simply sharing even fragments of news with other Tibetans.

This is the second prison sentence for Lobsang Dorje in just over a decade. His first incarceration was in 2008 for refusing to comply with Chinese officials running a “patriotic education” campaign at his monastery, located in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) in Ngaba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan, in the Tibetan area of Amdo. Along with another monk named Kunga, they were initially detained in May 2008 and sentenced to two years in prison.



## READING SUGGESTION

### MORALITY AND MONASTIC REVIVAL IN POST-MAO TIBET, BY JANE E. CAPLE

Editor: University of Hawaii Press

Publication date: March 2019

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

After the destruction of the Mao era, Tibet's great monasteries began undertaking the herculean task of rebuilding themselves – often from the ground up. Jane Caple's book, based on years of field research in northern Tibet, aims to look beyond the perspective of repression and resistance to examine the ways that Tibetan monastic communities have grappled with preserving their morality amid a changing society. On the question of economic self-sufficiency, for example, Caple notes how ideas from the Tibetan exile community espoused by the Dalai Lama, moral rhetoric based on the Buddhist scriptures and laws enforced by the Chinese state all influence the different methods monasteries are using to support themselves.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **21-25 OCTOBER**  
FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) Congress in Taipei, Taiwan
- **3-5 NOVEMBER**  
8<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Tibet Support Groups in Dharamsala, India
- **14-15 NOVEMBER**  
Geneva Forum by the Central Tibetan Administration on “China's High-tech Repression & Its Global Transfer: Religious Groups as the Primary Victims”
- **28-29 NOVEMBER**  
UN Forum on Minority Issues in Geneva