



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Repression in Tibet “more severe” than other areas of China: State Dept. report

<https://savetibet.org/repression-in-tibet-more-severe-than-other-areas-of-china-state-dept-report>

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China’s repression of free speech, religion, movement, association and assembly in Tibet and Xinjiang in 2019 “was more severe than in other areas of the country,” the [US State Department’s new Human Rights Report](#) says.

The report, released March 11, 2020, says that “Han Chinese CCP (Chinese Communist Party) members held the overwhelming majority of top party, government, police, and military positions in the [Tibet Autonomous Region] and other Tibetan areas,” debunking Beijing’s claim that it provides Tibetans with autonomy under China’s rule.

According to the report, China disrupted traditional Tibetan living patterns and customs and accelerated the forced assimilation of Tibetans into mainstream Chinese society through:

- promoting an influx of non-Tibetans to traditionally Tibetan areas
- expanding the domestic tourism industry
- forcibly [settling and urbanizing Tibetan nomads](#) and farmers
- and [weakening Tibetan-language education](#) in public schools and [religious education in monasteries](#).

China annexed Tibet, a [historically independent country](#), in 1959 following a violent conquest of the Himalayan country. Today, China continues to [rule Tibet with an iron fist](#).

ICT quote

“The State Department report describes a reality of systemic surveillance, intimidation and punishment experienced by Tibetans under Chinese rule,” International Campaign for Tibet President Matteo Mecacci said. “Tibetans are treated as second-class citizens and [discriminated against](#), whether it is about learning their native language, practicing their faith or moving around in their ancestral land. Over 60 years of oppression have not eradicated a beautiful ancient culture that has a lot to offer to China and the world. The CCP should recognize the role of Tibetans and their tradition instead trying to stifle them.”

Foreign travel denied

Tibetans faced significant hurdles in acquiring passports, and that it was virtually impossible for Buddhist monks and nuns to do so.

The report says the Chinese government's unwillingness to issue or even renew old passports for Tibetans created, in effect, a ban on foreign travel for the Tibetan population. It adds, "Han Chinese residents of Tibetan areas did not experience the same difficulties."

Tibetan political prisoners

Referring to [Tibetan political prisoners](#), the report says Chinese authorities continued to detain Tibetans arbitrarily for indefinite periods of time in 2019.

The report highlights the cases of the Panchen Lama (abducted alongside his family in May 1995 [when he was just six years old](#)); Thubpa, a monk from Ngaba County ([detained in late 2017](#)); and Lodee Gyatso ([arrested outside the Potala Palace in Lhasa](#) in January 2018), none of whom have been seen since their detention began.

The report says legal safeguards for detained or imprisoned Tibetans were inadequate in both design and implementation. Criminal suspects in the People's Republic of China have the right to hire a lawyer or other legal representation, but many Tibetan defendants, particularly those facing politically motivated charges, did not have access to representation, the report says.

Interestingly, the report reduces the number of Tibetan political prisoners from 303 [in the 2018 report](#) to 273 in the present report. The report says these numbers come from the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

The 2018 number was itself a dramatic reduction from the prior year's number of 507, but no explanation was given. This 2019 report explains the situation by saying the CECC political prisoner database (PPD) "is believed to contain only a small fraction of the actual number of political prisoners due to Chinese government censorship, and a change in the number of PPD records compared with previous years does not necessarily reflect a change in the human rights situation."

Of the 115 cases for which the CECC had information on sentencing, punishment ranged from 15 months' to life imprisonment, the report says.

Surveillance in Tibetan areas

The report says that monitoring and disruption of telephone and internet communications were particularly widespread in Tibetan areas, and that the government installed surveillance cameras in monasteries.

It says China continued to block content from any source that discussed topics deemed sensitive, including the [Dalai Lama](#) and Tibet.

Lack of access for foreign organizations

The report says China continued to restrict and evict local NGOs that received foreign funding and international NGOs that provided assistance to Tibetan communities.

It adds that almost all NGOs were forced to curtail their activities altogether due to [travel restrictions](#), official intimidation of staff members and the failure of local partners to renew project agreements.

For the past several years, the United States has been providing \$8 million annually for developmental projects in Tibetan areas.

Tibetans in Nepal

[In the Nepal section of the report](#), the conditions of [Tibetan refugees](#) there is referenced.

The reports says the Nepali government “has not issued refugee cards to Tibetan refugees since 1995. [The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] estimated three-quarters of the approximately 12,000 resident Tibetan refugees remained undocumented, including all of whom were younger than the age of 16 in 1995 or had been born since.”

The report also highlights Nepal’s restrictions on the freedom of movement and assembly of Tibetan refugees.

The full text of the Tibet section of the report can be read here: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/china/tibet/>



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