



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### **Elderly Tibetan and son detained for listening to Dalai Lama**

Read online: <https://savetibet.org/elderly-tibetan-and-son-detained-for-listening-to-dalai-lama>

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Merely listening to teachings by the Dalai Lama on their phone landed a 75-year-old man and his son in custody late last year in Tibet, where the Chinese government routinely violates Tibetans' religious freedom.

Chinese police detained Jampa Dorje and his son on or near Dec. 30, 2019 in Dzogang (Chinese: Zuogong) county in Chamdo (Changdu) prefecture in central Tibet.

Radio Free Asia's Tibetan service first reported on their apprehension on March 30, and the International Campaign for Tibet later verified the information.

### **Forced to promise they won't do it again**

Geshe Jampa, a Tibetan monk living in southern India, told RFA that Jampa Dorje and son "were detained on a charge of listening to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's teachings on their mobile phone, and also for speaking to their daughters who are living in exile." Geshe Jampa also confirmed to ICT that the two men had listened to the teaching live on their phone.

Another source told RFA that police eventually released the father and son for showing "a good attitude" in custody but warned them they could have faced up to five years in prison for their offenses.

The authorities also took down the phone numbers of their family members and forced Jampa Dorje and his son to sign a document promising never again to listen to the Dalai Lama or receive phone calls from their daughters.

### **Banning the Dalai Lama from his homeland**

Although the Dalai Lama is one of the most admired people on Earth, the Chinese government restricts any mention of him in his homeland of Tibet, which the Dalai Lama was forced to flee in 1959 when China's occupation and annexation of the historically independent country began.

In the more than 60 years since then, Chinese authorities have never allowed the Dalai Lama to return home and have punished and arrested Tibetans for even owning a photo of him.

According to RFA, in July 2019, police held a Tibetan man from the region of Amdo in custody for 10 days after he shared a photograph of the Dalai Lama on the messaging platform WeChat.

### **Human rights violations**

Chinese officials' attempts to ban any mention of the Dalai Lama in Tibet are part of their overall denial of Tibetans' religious freedom.

As ICT reported this week, Chinese authorities recently announced they would reopen some monasteries around the Tibetan capital of Lhasa following the coronavirus outbreak. However, the Chinese government has kept major religious restrictions in place, including 24/7 surveillance of temples and bans on children and government officials taking part in religious ceremonies.

The Chinese government also violates Tibetans' human rights across the board, including by preventing them from having contact with the outside world.

In Dzogang County, where Jampa Dorje and his son live, authorities strictly monitor communications, and residents have not been able to speak with their family members in exile during the coronavirus outbreak.



International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) | 1825 Jefferson Place NW | Washington, DC 20036 | United States of America  
Phone: (202) 785-1515 | Fax: (202) 785-4343 | [info@savetibet.org](mailto:info@savetibet.org)

ICT Europe  
Funenpark 1D | 1018 AK  
Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265  
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266  
[icteurope@savetibet.nl](mailto:icteurope@savetibet.nl)

ICT Deutschland e.V.  
Schönhauser Allee 163 | 10435  
Berlin, Germany  
Phone: +49 (0)30 27879086  
Fax: +49 (0)30 27879087  
[info@savetibet.de](mailto:info@savetibet.de)

ICT Brussels  
11, rue de la linière | 1060  
Brussels, Belgium  
Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10  
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32  
[info@save-tibet.eu](mailto:info@save-tibet.eu)