



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

China's hiring practices reveal state-sponsored discrimination in Tibet

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Recently published police recruitment announcements in Tibet illustrate how China's hiring practices discriminate against Tibetans, including by barring individuals for participating in "separatist activities" and those whose family members have "exited the country illegally."

In an announcement for "Public Recruitment of Police Auxiliary Personnel" issued by eight departments in Lithang County (dated May 25, 2020), the disqualifying conditions for recruits include:

Participating in, supporting, or funding for ethnic separatist activities; participating in or supporting illegal activities such as hitting, smashing, looting, and arson; sheltering, hiding or conniving with all kinds of illegal persons; fabricating and spreading rumors and false information that undermine social stability; participating in and supporting illegal activities such as demonstrations, rallies, gathering, and protests that are related to ethnic splitting and sabotage activities.

The Chinese government often claims that any expression by Tibetans of their unique culture and religion is "separatist activity." China has ruled over Tibet with an iron fist since annexing the historically independent country in 1959.

The eight departments that coordinated in making the May 25 announcement in Lithang (which is located in the Tibetan area of Kham currently administered by Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province) are the Lithang County Discipline Inspection Committee, Lithang County Organization Department, Lithang County Political and Legal Committee, Lithang County Human Resources and Social Security Bureau, Lithang County Finance Bureau, Lithang County Education and Sports Bureau, Lithang County Health Development Bureau, and the Lithang County Public Security Bureau.

Lithang is a historically important region for Tibetans. It is the birth place of the 7th and the 11th Dalai Lamas and in modern times has seen vibrant expressions of Tibetan identity, religion and culture.

This is not the first time that such conditions have been listed for job announcements in Lithang. In at least one previous instance, these exact formulations were used for a job announcement by the Kardze Prefecture government. In 2017, the Kardze Prefecture Public Security Bureau had an announcement for recruiting auxiliary police personnel that used similar formulations. An announcement on May 2, 2020 for police recruitment by the Dabpa (Chinese: Daocheng) County People's Court in Kardze Prefecture says, in addition to the conditions in the Lithang announcement, that "[t]hose who have received or are receiving subsidies from illegal overseas fund organizations" are disqualified.

In comparison to the Lithang police recruitment announcement, one made by Lhoka (Chinese: Shannan) City in the Tibet Autonomous Region in December 2019 for a similar recruitment does not include participation in separatist activities as disqualifying. Instead, in an obvious reference to Tibetans who fled to India and other countries in response to Chinese aggression, one of the conditions that bars candidacy for employment is if the individual "or family members have illegally entered or exited the country." In January 2020, it was announced that all 19 candidates selected in Lhoka were Tibetans, indicating that the recruitment announcements are aimed at the Tibetan population.

Unlike the Lithang and the Dabpa announcements, the Lhoka announcement has a section on “political review” of recruits and a reference to “Interim Provisions on the Assessment and Political Review of the Recruitment of People’s Police by Public Security Organs” that is issued by the Chinese Ministry of Public Security. It says, “The political review work is organized strictly in accordance with the ‘Interim Provisions on the Public Security Organs’ Employment of the People’s Police for Political Review.’ The unit where the applicant is registered, the street (neighborhood committee), the township police station, or the county public security bureau fills in the political review opinions and stamps the official seal.”

In a recruitment announcement by the TAR government in 2018 for police personnel from among auxiliary police, yet another type of condition was mentioned by which the candidate had to “stand firm on and have a clear-cut understanding of the political principles against separatism, exposing and criticizing the Dalai, safeguarding the motherland’s reunification and national unity.” In contrast, the announcements for similar police recruitments in Hebei, Shandong, and Qinghai provinces as well as Guangxi prefecture lists the candidate or their family members participating in “illegal organizations, cults, or engag[ing] in other activities that endanger national security” as one of the disqualifying conditions.

China’s setting of political preconditions for Tibetans to get public jobs has a consistent pattern. In October 2019, the International Campaign for Tibet also reported on instances in the Tibetan capital Lhasa of job postings for which Chinese authorities require college graduates from the TAR who apply for jobs in public institutions to “reveal and criticize the Dalai Lama” and “have clear and firm political principles.” The State Department, in its Tibet section of the 2019 Report on International Religious Freedom, released on June 10, 2020, says, “Some Tibetans continued to encounter societal discrimination when seeking employment, engaging in business, and traveling for pilgrimage, according to multiple sources.”

During the National Conference on Public Security in May 2019—the first in 16 years—Chinese state media reported President Xi Jinping demanding political loyalty from the police force to “deliver on the two centenary goals [to] realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.” State media also reported that, “On political integrity, Xi demanded the police [to] closely follow the [Chinese Communist Party] Central Committee in terms of thinking, political orientation, and actions at all times.” Since state authorities view Tibetan dissent and rights campaigning as a direct challenge to the Party-State, multiple measures have been adopted to stem this dissent and enforce political loyalty to the Party-State in the aftermath of the popular Tibetan uprising in 2008.

In all of the above-mentioned cases, the Chinese authorities characterize perfectly legitimate activities as punishable, including, for example, considering Tibet historically independent, revering the Dalai Lama and criticizing the current political system in Tibet, all of which is protected by international law, particularly by the right to freedom of expression and the right to freedom of religion or belief. If Tibetans are disqualified from civil service or government employment because of alleged acts by family members, the Chinese authorities violate basic principles of rule of law and subject Tibetans to discriminatory policies.



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