



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

CCP demolishes important Buddha statues, detains Tibetans

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The International Campaign for Tibet deplores Chinese authorities' demolition of two Buddha statues around a prominent monastery in Drango (Chinese: Luhuo) county in the Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan province.

Reports say that beginning Dec. 12, 2021, a 99-foot-tall Buddha statue and, in subsequent days, another, three-story high Jampa (Maitreya or future Buddha) statue, as well as 45 Buddhist prayer wheels, were demolished. The Drango county authorities had claimed that construction documents were not approved and that the height of the statue violated local building codes.

The authorities also arbitrarily detained at least six Tibetan monks over suspicion that they informed the outside world about the demolition. Statues of the Buddha are of particular significance to Tibetan Buddhists and are an important part of Buddhist beliefs.

ICT calls on the Chinese authorities to respect the religious freedom and cultural rights of the Tibetan people, including those of Drango. Those detained should be immediately released, as they have been detained solely for disseminating information on the incident.

“This sacrilegious act by an atheist state has caused deep anguish among Tibetans in the region,” ICT Interim President Bhuchung K. Tsering said. “The demolitions are a direct assault on the religious freedom of the Tibetan Buddhists and an attempt to wipe out their history in the region. They contradict Chinese claims of protecting Tibetan cultural and religious heritage.”

Demolitions

Since Drango is in an earthquake-prone region, in October 2015, the local people contributed money to install the Buddha statue, with the knowledge of the authorities, to ward off natural calamities.

People with knowledge of the development point to the Drango county Communist Party secretary Wang Dongsheng as the man behind the demolition. He was appointed to the post in October 2021 and within a month had ordered the demolition of a monastic school in the county before ordering the demolition of the Buddha statues in the middle of last month.

In 2016, Wang was serving as the deputy party secretary of Serthar (Seda) county when thousands of monastic dwellings were demolished and the expulsion of monks, nuns and lay practitioners at Serthar Larung Gar Buddhist Institute took place. Prior to Serthar, Wang also served in Lithang and Tawu (Daofu), which have seen heavy clampdowns by authorities on the local Tibetans.



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

ICT Europe
Funenpark 1D | 1018 AK
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266
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

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