



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Major military drill in buildup to Tibetan Uprising anniversary

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The Chinese military has conducted a combat-readiness drill near Tibet's sensitive borders with India in the buildup to the often-volatile Tibetan Uprising Day on March 10.

Authorities in the Shigatse Military Division "conducted a combat readiness exercise under the background of real combat" close to the politically sensitive anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising of March 10, 1959, according to Chinese state media.

State media reported the drill was "an actual combat readiness pulling drill in the hinterland of the [Tibetan] plateau at an altitude of 4300 meters." Another report said, "The front was attacked by enemy artillery fire, and each vehicle quickly and closely camouflaged. As soon as the convoy set off, the enemy situation came immediately. After receiving the order, the formation vehicles quickly separated and drove to the concealed area. The officers and soldiers of each group immediately launched operations, evacuated and concealed equipment and materials, and strictly camouflaged them on the spot."

"This military drill shows that after more than 60 years, China's occupation of Tibet remains a threat not only to the survival of Tibetan culture but to the safety of India and other countries in the free world," said the International Campaign for Tibet, an advocacy group that promotes human rights and democratic freedoms for the Tibetan people.

ICT added: *"In the case of Ukraine, the world is seeing what happens when authoritarian governments invade their smaller neighbors, just as China did to Tibet decades ago. The global community must stand up for Tibetans before China's repressive rule spreads any farther."*

The Shigatse Military Division oversees the strategically important Tibetan borders with India. Chinese authorities have been building infrastructure along this region to indicate the existence of continued tension with India.

State media said the most recent exercise in Shigatse will be followed by the next step during which "the regiment will conduct segmented drills and key training on team cooperation, enemy information collection, terrain research and judgment, etc., and continuously improve the level of actual combat training of the troops."

March 10 anniversary

March 10 will mark the 63rd anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising against China's occupation of Tibet. Chinese forces eventually crushed the uprising and forced the Dalai Lama into exile in India, where he remains to this day.

Under China's rule, Tibet is now the least-free country on Earth in a tie with South Sudan and Syria, according to recent rankings from the watchdog group Freedom House.

In recent years, China has conducted military drills around the politically sensitive period of Tibetan Uprising Day, as well as the Tibetan demonstrations of 1989, 2008 and other times.

On March 9, 2014, an “emergency stability maintenance” drill was held in Lhasa, Tibet’s capital, with armed paramilitary police in balaclavas standing in formation and armored vehicles to test “the comprehensive combat capability” of the armed forces.

In March 2015, the authorities in the Tibet Autonomous Region announced a strengthening of “counter-terrorist” measures, while police in other areas were equipped with fire extinguishers in case of Tibetan self-immolations.

On March 2, 2018, there was a major military drill in Lhasa that included a mass show of force of “combat-ready” troops from the People’s Liberation Army and the People’s Armed Police.

On March 6, 2020, a joint military drill was held in central Lhasa, with “combat-ready” troops of the People’s Liberation Army, firefighters and officers from the People’s Armed Police.



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