



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

China's 100-day "crackdown on crimes" and Tibet ahead of Party Congress

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October 12, 2022

On June 25 2022, China's Ministry of Security launched a 100-day crackdown labelled "Hundred Days Action" targeting illegal activities related to crimes against women, children, the elderly, the disabled and powerless groups in society. While reportedly prompted by a public outcry over police inaction in response to the assault of four women in Lubei district of Tangshen city, Hebei province on June 10, the crackdown has evolved into a campaign targeting gang crime and gradually shifting to enforcing "stability" in the lead-up to the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, which begins Oct. 16. In Tibet, in the run-up to the 20th National Congress, several apparently politically motivated arrests have been reported in the past months.

The National Congress, held every five years, will discuss governance plans and priorities. During the meeting, Xi Jinping will be given an unprecedented third term as General-Secretary of the Communist Party of China.

The 100-day campaign began on June 25, 2022, and accordingly was to end last week. Its focus expanded from gang crimes against the vulnerable to so-called "separatist" activities. As a result of the campaign, several Tibetans were reportedly arrested for possessing photos of the Dalai Lama or sharing information with contacts abroad.

The 100-day campaign suggests that, once again, the Chinese authorities are using a vaguely defined mission to arbitrarily, indiscriminately and without accountability limit the freedoms of Tibetans inside Tibet. This 100-day crackdown and its efforts to control and silence Tibetans has already transitioned and morphed into the security and stability maintenance plan for the 20th Party Congress.

In a departure from past pre-Congress strategies, the Chinese government has steered clear of provocative language that explicitly targets "separatists," "the Dalai Clique" or "anti-China Western forces." It has instead employed vague and general language emphasizing the use of the political and legal apparatus to "resolutely adhere to the bottom line of 'no trouble, no chaos to the central government,'" "strictly supervise and inspect," "keep an eye on key areas," "discover hidden problems in a timely manner and rectify promptly" and "ensure implementation with iron discipline."

A campaign to silence critics and distract from government incompetence

Despite fears of rising crime across China, Qiu Baoli, head of the security administration bureau at the Ministry of Public Security, reported in the first half of this year that criminal cases nationwide fell by 16.3% year on year, and people's sense of security has steadily improved. Given the decrease in reported instances of crime and the shifting focus to gang violence, fraud and separatism, this raises suspicions that the 100-day campaign may have been launched for other reasons, such as to enforce stability ahead of the 20th National Party Congress or to reassure citizens who feel frustrated by the cruelty and callousness of government-enforced isolation tactics during the pandemic.

At the end of September, a week before the campaign's original end date, the Chinese state newspaper China Daily reported that "police resolved about 640,000 criminal cases and detained 1.4 million suspects" during the

nationwide crackdown on crime. The head of the security administration bureau even boasted about new preventative policing capabilities that have “accelerated the development of a public security prevention and control system.”

Local adaptations of the 100-day campaign

In Tibet and other so-called “minority” areas, the campaign is apparently being used as a cover for authorities to intensify their crackdown on those who hold dissenting views.

Such local adaptations were reported in Xinjiang (known to Uyghurs as East Turkestan) as early as August. For example, while the national 100-day anti-crime campaign focused on crimes such as theft, US broadcaster Radio Free Asia reported that Xinjiang officials are targeting allegedly “disloyal” Uyghurs who are viewed as “religious extremists,” “separatists,” “terrorists” and “two-faced persons.” A police officer in Hotan (Chinese: Hetian), a major town in southwestern Xinjiang, confirmed that, “Pickpockets and thieves are in the periphery of our target in this operation.” “The main targets are the ones I mentioned earlier [disloyal Uyghurs].”

Examples of the crackdown in Tibet

According to Tibet Times, a Tibetan-language news site published in India, the crackdown has been in full swing across Tibet’s capital of Lhasa, with the Lhasa police force increasing police deployment. This has led to more arbitrary police searches and monitoring, resulting in arbitrary and incommunicado detentions of Tibetans.

In Tibet, the 100-day campaign has also adopted a digital focus. In the last few months, the Chinese government has posted banners in Tibetan that read, “Digital security for people, Digital security depends on people” and held meetings with local Tibetans warning against contacting family members and business partners outside the country.

Moreover, several cases of arbitrary detention and disappearance have been reported from Tibet. On July 31, Tibetan exile media outlet Voice of Tibet reported that six Tibetans from the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region were detained for unclear reasons during the 100-day campaign in Tibet. On Aug. 12, Karma Samdup, from Sernyi District, was arrested for wearing a Dalai Lama locket and for keeping photos of the Dalai Lama in his car. On Aug. 13, a mother and daughter duo from Nagchu city were arrested, with the daughter subjected to incommunicado detention for contacting outsiders and for sharing illegal photos.

In addition, the recent arrest of seven Tibetans who have been allegedly accused of sharing information and audio-visual material of repressive COVID-19 restrictions may also be treated as cases under the 100-day campaign.

Recurrence of the 3-year crackdown in Tibet from 2018-21

The nature of the campaign in Tibet and Xinjiang could be likened to the earlier three-year crackdown on crimes called, “Sweep away black and eliminate evil,” implemented from January 2018 to 2021. In fact, the three-year crackdown on crimes was notably invoked when the current incarnation was launched. The three-year crackdown sought to eliminate organized crimes as well as “social disorder”. It was characterized by public displays of slogans that read, “Where there is black, sweep it, where there is no black, eliminate evil, and where there is no evil, cure disorder.”

The Chinese state news agency Xinhua reported that, by the end of March 2019, the campaign had uncovered 14,226 cases of “black and evil” activity involving 79,018 people. The environmental and anti-corruption activist Anya Sengdra was notably sentenced to seven years in prison in December 2019 under this campaign against “black” and “evil” forces.



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