



ICT'S TIBET ROUNDUP — ISSUE 12

JULY 16-31, 2023

ICT's Tibet Roundup is a twice-monthly compilation of curated news from various sources, including Chinese state media, official Chinese documents, briefings, information reported by Tibetans in Tibet and international commentary on Tibet. The roundup is organized in categories, including law, politics, culture, economics, climate and commentary. The focus is on presenting news and reports with limited analysis and editorializing.

POLITICS

1. China's ideologue in chief in Tibet

Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, recently conducted a [visit to Tibet](#) from July 25-27. Shi Taifeng, head of the United Front Work Department, accompanied Wang during the visit. Before Tibet, Wang toured Xinjiang (which Uyghurs know as East Turkestan) in May.

Following the 20th Party Congress in October 2022, Wang Huning, China's ideologue in chief, was declared Chairperson of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference during the "two sessions" in March 2023. This is his first visit to the officially designated Tibet Autonomous Region in his new role. He will most likely visit Tibetan-inhabited areas in and outside the TAR at least once a year but as much as three times a year if his predecessor, [Wang Yang's](#), record is any indication.

During Wang Huning's visit, he underscored the mainline party priority of "forging a strong sense of the Chinese national community" and the importance of implementing the party's strategy for governing Tibet in the "new era." Wang highlighted four major aspects (stability, development, ecology and strengthening the border) as focus areas for building a "socialist modern Tibet."

Wang visited Nyingtri (Chinese: Linzhi) and Lhasa during the inspection tour, two cities visited by [Xi Jinping](#) during his surprise visit in July 2021.

2. Chinese college students volunteer in Tibet

The first group of Chinese college student volunteers for the year arrived in Tibet on July 24. State media reported that a total of [1,230 volunteers](#) from various mainland Chinese cities and provinces, including Beijing, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Jiangxi, Henan and more, will be recruited for the program.

Upon their arrival in Tibet, the volunteers undergo a comprehensive 4-day training program covering a range of topics, including Xi Jinping Thought, Party History and mental health education. Following the training, they are assigned to various service positions in 67 counties across the Tibet Autonomous Region, where they will primarily engage in youth work and other services.

The Tibet Special Office of the Western Plan noted that 2023 marks the 20th anniversary of the Tibet Special Project for College Students to Volunteer in the Western Plan. Over the past two decades, the initiative has dispatched a total of 11,751 volunteers for the Western Plan's efforts in Tibet, out of which 3,937 volunteers (or 33.5%) remained in Tibet for employment or entrepreneurship after completing their service period.

The College Student Volunteer Service West Plan, a large-scale volunteer service project initiated by the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security in 2003, aims to recruit fresh graduates or postgraduate students from ordinary colleges and universities. They are then sent to grassroots areas in Tibet and other areas designated as China's west for voluntary service in fields like education, health, agricultural technology, poverty alleviation and social governance for a duration of one to three years. Since 2011, a project specifically for Tibet has been part of this program.

3. Party Secretary underlines Tibet's role as a "national security barrier of China"

On the eve of Army Day on Aug. 1, [Wang Junzheng](#), the Secretary of the Party Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region and First Secretary of the Party Committee of the Tibet Military Region, visited the officers and soldiers of the troops stationed in Tibet. During the visit, Wang Junzheng emphasized the importance of implementing Xi Jinping's thought on strengthening the military and fostering unity between the military, the government and the people to enhance the level of dual support work in the new era.

Wang Junzheng underlined Tibet's role as a national security barrier of China by emphasizing that "Tibet is an important national security barrier and bears the political responsibility of defending the southwestern border of the motherland."

He urged the troops stationed in Tibet and all officers and soldiers to engage in comprehensive study and implementation of Xi Jinping's new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics theme of education. He reiterated the absolute leadership of the party over the military and the importance of adhering to Chairman Xi's directives and responsibilities.

Furthermore, Wang Junzheng called for the thorough implementation of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important instructions on Tibet work and the party's strategy for governing Tibet in the new era. He urged the troops to actively contribute to the "four major events" and "four creations" and strive to promote Tibet's "long-term stability and high-quality development" through Chinese-style modernization.

RELIGION

4. Ideological indoctrination and propaganda for monastics in Jomda County in Chamdo

In a move to further impose control over monks and nuns in monastic venues and solidify the indoctrination efforts of the "Three Consciousnesses," the temple management committees in Jomda (Jiangda) County in Chamdo (Changdu) prefecture-level city have recently organized coercive "[Three Consciousnesses](#)" education and "Send the Law to the Temple" propaganda activities. The preaching campaign was conducted across all temples in the county, affecting more than 3,000 monks and nuns.

Under the guise of legal enlightenment, the education sessions employed manipulative tactics, simplifying legal concepts and presenting vivid case studies to convey the messages of the "Constitution," "Criminal Law," and "Civil Code," as well as other laws and regulations. The integration of these legal teachings with the "three consciousness" indoctrination serves to normalize the control exerted over religious circles and enforce obedience to specific state-sanctioned standards. The so-called goal of cultivating "four good" monks and nuns prioritize compliance with state directives rather than respecting the individual rights and freedoms of the religious practitioners.

The compulsory nature of the education sessions, coupled with the one-sided focus on state-prescribed laws and impose ideological conformity undermines the autonomy of monks and nuns and stifles their ability to express and practice their faith freely. This approach represents a concerning trend of using legal propaganda to suppress religious dissent and impose ideological conformity, ultimately disregarding the fundamental rights and dignity of religious practitioners.

LAW

5. New “Measures for the Administration of Religious Activity Sites”

The State Administration of Religious Affairs recently issued Order No. 19, announcing the promulgation of the "[Measures for the Administration of Religious Activity Sites](#)" set to take effect on Sept. 1, 2023. Concurrently, the "Approval and Registration Measures" will be abolished. According to state media, this development holds significant importance for the comprehensive implementation of the "Regulations on Religious Affairs" and enhancing the institutionalization and standardization of religious activity venue management.

Comprising 10 chapters and 76 articles, the "Measures" introduce a refined management system for religious activity sites. Key provisions include defining procedural requirements for establishing and registering religious activity venues, standardizing their management through the establishment of management organizations. The "Measures" also outline personnel management systems and regulate religious and social activities within the venues, as well as foreign exchanges. Additionally, responsibilities pertaining to religious activity management, construction management and safety measures, such as fire protection, food, sanitation and construction, are clarified for religious activity venues. The "Measures" mandate the appointment of supervisors to reinforce internal management and further specify the supervisory roles of religious affairs departments, the guidance of religious affairs for religious groups and the supervision of religious citizens.

COMMENTARY

6. Night-time lighting study of Tibet’s prisons and detention centers

RAND Europe published a [night-time lighting study of Tibet’s prisons and detention centers](#) based on a publicly available data set of 83 known detention facilities authored by the Tibet Research Project.

The study finds:

- There are at least 79 prisons and detention centers across Tibet with most of these small and low-security detention centers spread throughout towns and villages in Tibet.
- Almost all these facilities were built before Chen Quanguo, the architect of China’s Uyghur genocide, became Party Secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region in 2011, although Chen might have repurposed the existing facilities for political purposes.
- The overall size and scale of the Tibetan detention system has been relatively consistent over the past decade.

- The Tibetan detention system is still very much a black hole to the international community. The precise workings, nature and scale of the Chinese Communist Party's efforts to imprison and detain Tibetans, however, remain poorly understood.
- There is a need for further research to address many of the research gaps and to better understand the situation.

7. Foreign journalist report contradicts Chinese government claim

A foreign journalist, despite gaining access through a government-arranged media visit to Tibet, has confirmed human rights accusations of forced assimilation of Tibetan children in the controversial state-run boarding schools. During the visit, the journalist observed that students learned both Mandarin and Tibetan but expressed concern that Tibetan culture appeared overshadowed by Chinese influence.

According to the journalist's [report](#), students and teachers at a secondary school in Lhoka (Shannan) were summoned on a Sunday to emphasize the Chinese government's slogan of promoting education in Tibet in "harmony and normality."

Locals, speaking anonymously to the journalist, expressed discomfort with the growing prominence of Mandarin, although authorities defend it as the only way forward.

The school's vice president, Wang Chuin'eqa, stated that they have 30 full-time Tibetan language teachers, offering five to seven hours of Tibetan classes per week, similar to Mandarin. However, there were indications that Tibetan subjects become less emphasized in subsequent years. Wang had told the journalist that, "There are more Tibetan subjects in the first year of secondary school ... In the following years, less."

The United Nations has raised concerns about the impact of boarding schools on Tibetan students' cultural heritage, as reports indicate insufficient education in their language, history and culture. With nearly 1 million children enrolled in boarding schools in Tibet, there are worries that the focus on Mandarin may contribute to the erosion of Tibetan identity and distance them from their families.

Despite criticism and accusations of cultural genocide, Chinese authorities maintain that boarding schools present excellent opportunities for Tibetan children, leading to better professional prospects. During the visit, Chinese flags and messages of patriotism and gratitude toward the Communist Party were visibly displayed within the school premises. The controversy surrounding Tibet's education system continues to garner international attention, with ongoing concerns about the preservation of Tibetan culture and language.

We welcome your feedback! Send any thoughts about ICT's Tibet Roundup and ideas for future changes to research@savetibet.org.



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