



ICT'S TIBET ROUNDUP — ISSUE 19

NOVEMBER 1-15, 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 white paper on Tibet whitewashes abuses and rights violations

China released its latest white paper on Tibet on Nov. 10. Released by the State Council Information Office of China, the global propaganda mouth of the Chinese party-state, the white paper not only whitewashes CCP atrocities and human rights violations but also presents a model for dictatorships and authoritarian states worldwide to follow suit in repressing their populations, especially vulnerable minority populations. As the global propaganda mouth of the party-state, the white paper continues China's gradual and incremental policy to attempt erasing the country name "Tibet" for the Sinified name "Xizang" since September 2021.

Broken down into six sections, the white paper blatantly whitewashes abuses and violations of Tibetan cultural, religious, social, environmental, civil and political rights as China's "cultural development," "ethnic and religious promotion," "social development," "eco-environmental security barrier" and "democracy and rule of law."

The white paper glorifies China's positions on Tibet and Tibetans while hiding stark facts and truths from public eyes. For instance, the white paper states that no new Kashin-Beck disease cases have been detected among Tibetan children since 2018. The fact remains that the prevalence of KBD is 0.2% in the endemic villages, according to 2008 health statistics issued by the Chinese Ministry of Health, and is most prevalent in China's Shanxi province, according to studies. While the latest epidemic of KBD began in the late 1950s and lasted until the end of the 1980s across the world, the world is yet to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic that emerged from Wuhan in early 2020. The pandemic swept across the world, and Tibet is no exception. Yet

the white paper has zero mention of COVID-19 in Tibet, although the white paper purports to cover a range of issues in Tibet over the decades.

Overall, the white paper regurgitates old statements from past white papers but frames them in terms of CCP terminologies—like “new era,” “common prosperity,” “eco-civilization,” etc.—coined during Xi Jinping’s rule.

2. Top Chinese leader in Tibet Autonomous Region visits Nepal to consolidate BRI regionally

The top Chinese leader in the Tibet Autonomous Region, CCP Secretary Wang Junzheng, led a 12-member delegation to visit Nepal on a five-day visit Nov. 8-12. Wang’s Nepal visit took place after Nepali Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal visited Beijing and the Tibet Autonomous Region in late September for meetings with the top Chinese leaders in Beijing and Lhasa. Xi Jinping visited Nepal in October 2019. The exchange of leaders at the top level signals China giving strategic importance to Nepal in terms of consolidating its Belt and Road Initiative regionally while the project falters globally.

According to the Kathmandu Post, the Nepali prime minister’s office [said](#) that “Matters of mutual interests including trade, connectivity, tourism and people-to-people relations were discussed on the occasion.” Wang in Nepal echoed this, saying his visit’s focus was “implementing the agreements and understandings” signed between Nepal and China.

Wang visited the Nepali lake-city Pokhara, which Nepali media reported as the country’s leaders seeking China’s help in making the airport fully operational. However, almost all Nepali media and leadership seemingly avoid the difficult issue of the airport built with Chinese finances and executed by China CAMC engineering of the state-owned conglomerate, Sinomach. A [New York Times](#) investigative report revealed that China and Nepal signed a 20-year agreement in 2016 for loans that Nepal agreed to start repaying in 2026. Observers see the airport as a debt trap by China, which the poor Himalayan country would struggle to pay back if it is able to at all.

Nepal and Tibet share a long border. With the high-level exchange between Nepal and China and the leadership of the officially designated “Tibet Autonomous Region” executing the BRI flagship project in Nepal, borders are expected to remain highly securitized for Tibetans fleeing from Chinese rule while trade prospects for China and Nepal spiral even deeper into Chinese control.

3. Tibetan author says publication regulations enforced strictly

Tibetan diaspora media outlet [Tibet Times](#) reported on Nov. 13 that publication regulations are enforced strictly in Tibet, citing a Tibetan author in

Tibet whose name has been withheld for protection against repercussions. According to the anonymous author, popular authors and publishers of authors whose work led to imprisonment in the past face stringent controls. The author also told Tibet Times that although China cites numbers and claims a prospering Tibetan language publication, the publications in reality only amplify the party-state's ideologies, policies and resolutions of the 18th to 20th Party Congresses.

When asked about the challenges in publishing their literary work, the author said that individuals and organizations have to seek approval from their respective provincial authorities controlling publications. Anyone wishing to publish their work first has to inform the publisher of the content, funding and marketing of their work. The publisher then seeks approval from the provincial authorities in charge of controlling publications. The authorities in turn send the work to a reviewer for political content in the draft. Since the review is not public, it is not known whether a reviewer or multiple reviewers are involved in the process. If the reviewer does not see political content in the draft, it is then approved for publication.

Since the Administrative Regulations on the Publication came into effect in 2016, organizations and individuals have had to seek publication approval from their controlling respective local, county or provincial authorities.

4. Tibetan monk under arbitrary detention

Kunchok Dakpa, a Tibetan monk affiliated with Tashi Monastery in Têwo county, Gansu province, was reportedly apprehended by Chinese authorities on Oct. 29, according to Tibet Times. This incident adds to the pattern of arbitrary arrests and disappearances of Tibetans in the region by Chinese authorities, exemplified by the plight of Kunchok Dakpa. Presently, there is no available information regarding his current whereabouts, health status or the specific reasons underlying his arrest.

Sources within Tibet conveyed that, despite the passage of 10 days since Kunchok Dakpa's apprehension, Chinese authorities have not allowed any meeting with his relatives. A source told [Tibet Times](#), "Almost ten days have passed since his arrest. His relatives are not allowed to meet him even though they have tried. Usually, Kunchok is a simple religious man but not one who would break the law of the Chinese government. A few years ago, he bought some ritual objects from Nepal, and I think that would not go against the law. All the people around him know that he is not a lawbreaker."

The absence of details surrounding his arrest adds to the broader concern about the Chinese government's practice of arbitrary detentions in Tibet.

5. Woman arrested for sharing photo of the Dalai Lama on Chinese TikTok

Chinese authorities arrested [Wangchuk Tso](#), a Tibetan woman, on Oct. 26, 2023, for reportedly sharing a photo of Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the Chinese social media app Douyin or TikTok. Wangchuk Tso, residing in Dronglong Village, Dhola County, located in the designated "Chinese divided area" of Qinghai province, faces an uncertain fate in the aftermath of her arrest.

Despite the passage of two weeks since her detention, critical information about Wangchuk Tso's current condition and whereabouts remains undisclosed. Concerns have been expressed by a source cited in Tibet Times, reflecting the heightened anxiety surrounding the situation. Notably, when her family sought information about her well-being at the local police station, they were denied access to any details.

According to the same source, Wangchuk Tso's arrest was ostensibly linked to the act of sharing a photograph of the Dalai Lama on WeChat and maintaining contact with Tibetans in exile through written messages. The family's attempts to meet her have been consistently denied, and her husband's inquiry resulted in the confiscation of his mobile phone, which remains withheld by authorities.

6. Ideological indoctrination targets youth demographic

Chinese ideological indoctrination is being carried out in full force across Tibet with the youth demographic as the primary target.

As part of the indoctrination activities to adapt Tibetan youth to CCP ideals, student representatives of Lhasa No.3 Senior High School were taken to Chairman Mao Museum to "inherit the red gene, cultivate patriotism, and better build a sense of community for the Chinese nation," according to a [state media](#) report on Nov. 3. At the museum, the students were exposed to various CCP historical events to brainwash them into developing loyalty to the party and its ideals.

Chinese [state media](#) also reported that the Lhasa City Education System's Education Promotion Conference on Forging Chinese National Community Consciousness was held. Wang Zhen, director of the Ideological and Political Affairs Department of the Tibet Autonomous Region Education Department, in his speech reveals the long-term nature of the CCP project to develop the "Chinese national community consciousness." According to Wang, "education in building a strong sense of the Chinese nation's community in schools is a pilot, basic and strategic project to achieve Chinese-style modernization and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and is related to high-quality development and long-term stability. This promotion meeting will greatly promote the Lhasa City education system to summarize the effective practices in the early stage, condense typical experiences that

can be replicated and promoted, and serve as a good pioneer and vanguard for the education of Chinese national community consciousness for schools in our district, setting an example and setting a good example.”

In Sangri County in Lhoka (Chinese: Shannan) prefectural-level city, the second ideological and political education training for 269 teachers was held from Nov. 4-5. [State media](#) reported that academics specializing in Marxism and political ideologies led sessions on “Effective Integration of Curriculum and Ideology and Politics,” “Teachers’ Professional Ethics and Teacher Ethics and Style,” “Integration of Chinese and Tibetan Languages from the Perspective of the Chinese National Community” and “The Situation and Tasks of Tibet’s Anti-Separatist Struggle.”

RELIGION

7. Yushu Middle School says parents have obligation to ensure children don’t believe religion

The international religious liberty group, [Bitter Winter](#), published a letter in Chinese sent by the Yushu Second Ethnic Middle School to parents on Sept. 4, 2023. The group confirmed the authenticity of the letter locally. The letter instructs parents and schools that they have an obligation to ensure the children do not believe in religion.

The communication from Yushu Second Ethnic Middle School emphasizes the significance of upholding the legal principle of separating education and religion and instructs discouraging children from embracing religious beliefs as a shared obligation between educational institutions and parents.

Citing constitutional provisions and relevant laws, the communication staunchly instructs parents that attempting to guide, support or allow children to participate in religious activities is prohibited. It cites Article 36 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, emphasizing the legal prohibition against using religion in a manner that disrupts social harmony or undermines the national education system. The report points to a comprehensive legal framework, including the Constitution, Education Law, Law on the Protection of Minors, and Regulations on Religious Affairs, as evidence of China’s commitment to maintaining a clear separation between education and religious influence.

Furthermore, the document stresses that preventing minors from embracing religious beliefs is not only a legal obligation but a necessary step to ensure their healthy growth and secure a better future. The communication instructs that parents should serve as examples and join forces in actively resisting and preventing religious infiltration into schools, metaphorically referred to as building a “Great Wall” to safeguard the harmony and stability of educational environments and contribute to the long-term stability of the nation.

8. Chinese Panchen Lama gives novice monk ordination to grow acceptance and following

The CCP-appointed Chinese Panchen Lama, Gyaltzen Norbu, conferred ordination vows to 28 young monks of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery for the first time on Nov. 4, according to Chinese [state media](#). The ordination ceremony was timed for Lhabab Duchen, a Tibetan Buddhist festival celebrated to observe one of the great events in Buddha's life when the faithful believe Buddha descended to earth after a temporary visit to heaven to give teachings benefiting the gods and to repay the kindness of his mother.

Unlike the traditional Tibetan Buddhist practice of open access to all irrespective of age for the ordination of novice monks, the Chinese Panchen's ordination ceremony included only monks 18 years or older. China bans minor monks. While novice monks seeking ordination, which formally makes them a monk, are drawn to Buddhist masters due to their scholarship and reputation, the ordination ceremony by the Chinese Panchen Lama seems to be staged and coordinated to grow his following and acceptance, which have been fleeting for decades since the CCP appointed Gyaltzen Norbu as the Panchen Lama instead of the Dalai Lama-recognized Gendun Choekyi Nyima. Indicative of desperation for growing acceptance and following, Chinese state media describes the ceremony, saying, "This ordination shows that the Panchen Lama has the ability to accept disciples and ordain, marking improvement of Panchen's Buddhist attainments and religious status."

After the ordination ceremony, the Chinese Panchen in a typical script gave a speech saying, "We must cherish this good era, be grateful to the Party, listen to the Party, follow the Party, and establish and? firmly adhere to the "Three Consciousnesses," strive to be the "Four Good Monks," study the "Five Great Treatises" with concentration, strictly observe the precepts, serve believers, and repay the country and society with practical actions."

Earlier in November, Chinese [state media](#) reported that the Chinese Panchen had been appointed as the Chairman of the fifth board of directors of the Tibet Development Foundation. State media reported that the Chinese Panchen donated 500,000 yuan to the foundation. In recent months, the CCP has arranged numerous activities to grow acceptance of the Chinese Panchen, which have included making donations to charity, giving ordination to novice monks, giving sermons, and [paying](#) Tibetans to show up and receive blessings from the Chinese Panchen Lama.

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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