



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Reports: China arrests over 100 after Tibetans protest dam

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Chinese authorities have reportedly made mass arrests in Eastern Tibet amid major protests against a massive dam project that would force two villages to vacate and destroy several Buddhist monasteries and ancient murals.

According to [Radio Free Asia](#), authorities arrested over 100 Tibetan monks and other Tibetans on Thursday, Feb. 22. Their current status is unknown.

RFA said that Tibetans in Wonpotod (Tibetan: དབོན་པོ་རྫོང་, Chinese: Wangbuding) township, Derge (Chinese: Dege) County in Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan have been protesting since Feb. 14 against the planned construction of the 2,240-megawatt Kamtok (Gangtuo) hydropower station on the Drichu (Jinsha) River, located on the upper reaches of the Yangtze.

Mass protests are rare in Tibet due to the occupying Chinese government's extreme punishment for dissenters.

However, local Tibetans are reportedly distraught that the proposed dam would destroy six monasteries in the area, including one that contains centuries-old murals.

Well-known Tibetan writer Tsering Woeser, who is based in Beijing, wrote on [Facebook](#):

According to reports, Kamtok (Tibetan: གཞུ་ཐོག་, Chinese: Gangtuo) Hydropower Station, the "leading" cascade hydropower station built on the upper reaches of the Drichu (འབྲི་ཆུ་, Jinsha Jiang) River, will completely submerge at least six monasteries and two villages in Derge (Chinese: Dege) County, Kham. Among them, Wontoe (དབོན་རྫོང་, Chinese: Wangdui) and Yena (ཡེ་ན་, Chinese: Yinnan) Monasteries belong to the Sakya sect of Tibetan Buddhism, and they have a long history and survived the "Cultural Revolution." Ancient architecture styles and murals from them have precious historical and artistic values and have attracted the attention of researchers from all walks of life in recent years. A group of murals from the 14th to 15th centuries are considered "one of the most important Tibetan Buddhist murals discovered locally so far, and have high reference value for the study of Tibetan painting art." However, now due to the construction of hydropower station, monasteries and villages are facing the fate of being submerged. Researchers also pointed out the critical situation, "The hydropower station will cause greater difficulties in the subsequent preservation and research of the murals in Wontoe Monastery. The research and protection of these murals in the monastery is urgent."

Woeser wrote in Chinese. The above text is a translation.

The [International Campaign for Tibet](#) previously said it was deeply concerned about Chinese authorities' apparent disregard for the rights of local Tibetans and threat to relocate them. ICT calls on Chinese officials to respect the freedoms of peaceful protesters and to refrain from using violence or arbitrary detention against them.

ICT also urges the international community to press the Chinese government to respect international human rights standards.

The Chinese government must release all of the Tibetans its has arrested so far for protesting against this destructive dam project.

[Learn more about the arrests from Radio Free Asia.](#)



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@savetibet.eu