



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

ICT'S TIBET ROUNDUP — ISSUE 6

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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. Tibetan-language blog shut down

The Chinese government recently closed “Luktsang Palyon,” a widely read Tibetan-language blog, alleging copyright infringement, according to [Radio Free Asia](#). The closure, announced April 2 by the blog's administrator, adds to concerns about the suppression of Tibetan cultural and linguistic expression under the guise of legal and administrative measures. The administrator of the blog, whose request for the reinstatement of the blog appears unlikely to be granted, highlights a broader issue of language rights and cultural preservation in Tibet.

Established in March 2013, Luktsang Palyon (meaning “Tibet Sheep”) has been a vital resource for the dissemination of Tibetan culture and language, offering around 10,000 pieces of educational content including articles, stories, music lyrics and bilingual translations. This platform not only served Tibetans within the region but also those in exile, fostering a sense of community and cultural continuity. The closure of such an important cultural outlet under ambiguous legal pretexts is seen by many as part of a systematic effort by the Chinese government to marginalize the Tibetan language in favor of Mandarin, the national common language in occupied Tibet.

2. Misinformation circulates regarding alleged police killing of 20 students

[New Tang Dynasty TV](#), affiliated with the Falun Gong group, reported that armed Chinese police killed 20 students during a crackdown on more than

500 Tibetan students demonstrating at Lhasa Normal College, a teacher training institution in Lhasa, on March 16, 2024.

However, the International Campaign for Tibet, after verifying the facts with contacts in Lhasa, determined that no such event took place. ICT considers the report to be misinformation circulating on the internet.

3. China renames 30 Locations in Arunachal Pradesh to extend Tibet rule

The Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs has taken another assertive step in its political agenda regarding Arunachal Pradesh, India, a region it labels as "Zangnan" or the southern part of Tibet. According to a report on April 3 in [Global Times](#), a Chinese state-run tabloid with an international focus, Beijing issued its fourth list of standardized geographical names for 11 locations in Arunachal Pradesh, scheduled to come into effect on May 1.

This move follows previous releases of standardized names in 2017, 2021 and 2023, aimed at solidifying China's territorial claims over the region, which it asserts as part of its own territory despite strong a Tibetan historical footprint. It forms part of a broader political strategy by Beijing to strengthen its territorial assertions, akin to its actions in the South China Sea. Tensions between India and China have escalated, notably since the violent clash at Galwan Valley in June 2020, with ongoing border disputes exacerbating the situation.

At the heart of the territorial dispute lies the McMahon Line, a boundary established during the 1914 tripartite Simla Convention involving British India, China and Tibet. This boundary delineates approximately 90,000 square kilometers of territory along India's northeast and Tibet's south.

4. Wang Junzheng instructs central media in Tibet to promote Tibet propaganda

On April 8, Wang Junzheng, secretary of the Party Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region, convened a [meeting](#) with the heads of Chinese central media operating in Tibet. During the session, Wang emphasized the importance of implementing CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping's directives on the promotion of ideological work and cultivation of a favorable public opinion for a "socialist modern New Tibet."

Throughout the discussion, representatives from the Chinese central media outlets in Tibet shared insights and exchanged practices regarding propaganda and reporting. Wang Junzheng commended the central media for its correct political direction and conducting extensive, multi-faceted propaganda campaigns.

Highlighting the significance of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the 65th anniversary of Tibet's democratic reform, Wang stressed the pivotal role of the Chinese state media in shaping public perceptions and narratives.

While the party secretary gave his political instructions to the Chinese media operating in Tibet, the Foreign Correspondent's Club of China coincidentally issued a damning report of media freedom in China on April 8. The FCCC's report "[Masks Off, Barriers Remain](#)" states in its findings that:

- Almost all respondents (99%) said reporting conditions in China rarely or never met international reporting standards.
- Four out of five (81%) respondents said they had experienced interference, harassment or violence.
- 54% of respondents were obstructed at least once by police or other officials (2022: 56%), and 45% encountered obstruction at least once by persons unknown (2022: 36%).
- A majority of respondents had reason to believe the authorities had possibly or definitely compromised their WeChat (81%), their phone (72%) or placed audio recording bugs in their office or home (55%).
- Almost a third (32%) of respondents said their bureau was understaffed because they have been unable to bring in the required number of new reporters.
- 82% of respondents reported they had interviews declined by sources who stated they were not permitted to speak to foreign media or required prior permission.
- More than a third (37%) of respondents said reporting trips or interviews already confirmed were canceled last minute because of official pressure (2022: 31%).
- 49% of respondents indicated their Chinese colleague(s) had been pressured, harassed or intimidated at least once (2022: 45%; 2021: 40%).

RELIGION

5. New training manual for Tibetan monks in Gansu

Chinese authorities have distributed a stringent [new training manual](#) to Buddhist clergy in the monasteries of Kanlho (Chinese: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu province, according to Golok Jigme, a former Tibetan political prisoner from the region. This manual contains 10 rules, including a prohibition against displaying photographs of the Dalai Lama, the elderly Tibetan spiritual leader, following his eventual death. Additionally, it

forbids monks from participating in the process of recognizing the Dalai Lama's reincarnation, enforcing compliance with state regulations.

The guidelines also prevent monks from engaging in activities deemed to threaten national unity or disrupt societal stability under the pretext of religious practice. This includes banning any cooperation with Tibetan religious leaders and the exiled Tibetan community, whom the government labels as external separatist groups. The manual explicitly bars "illegal organizations or institutions" from monastic settings and mandates that the education of monks should exclude "separatist ideology." These measures are part of what is described as the "Sinicization" of religion, a policy that aligns with the Chinese Communist Party's broader efforts to reshape Tibetan Buddhism to conform with its state doctrines.

During a March visit to two counties within the prefecture, He Moubao, secretary of China's State Party Committee, underscored the need to Sinicize religion and implement the CCP's religious policies to maintain national unity and social stability. This approach to religion in Tibet equates religious expression with separatism and threats to Chinese security, fostering a perilous political climate for Tibetan monks, nuns and lay Buddhists.

5. United Front's national security preaching tour

In efforts to bolster the so-called "three consciousnesses"—national awareness, citizen engagement and adherence to the rule of law—campaign among farmers, herdsmen, monks and nuns, the Dzogang (Zuogang) county CCP and government under Chamdo (Changdu) Prefectural-level city dispatched officials from the United Front Work Department of Zuogong County on a "three consciousness" tour across 14 villages and temples. With a focus on reaching out to 500 individuals, including monks, nuns and residents, the officials preached the significance of supporting the Communist Party's leadership and prioritizing state laws over religious regulations as part of the "Eighth Five-Year Plan" for legal popularization. According to [state media](#), they emphasized the cultivation of "politically reliable monks" and the safeguarding of national security with content focused on the National Security Law of the People's Republic of China. The Tibetans were instructed to abide by China's law and uphold national security.

Similarly, on March 21, the United Front Work Department and the District Justice Bureau conducted the "Law into Religious Venues" campaign in monasteries in Nedong County, located in the Lhoka Prefectural-level city. According to Chinese [state media](#) reports, this campaign is part of the promotion of the "Eighth Five-Year Plan" aimed at propagating Xi Jinping's thoughts on the rule of law. During this campaign, monks "receive education" on China's laws concerning religion, including the "Religious Affairs Regulations," "Measures on Management of Reincarnation in Tibetan Buddhism" and other state religious regulations.

DEVELOPMENT

6. Relocation of Atsok Monastery commences as part of Yangqu Hydropower Project

The relocation of Atsok Monastery, located in Palkha village of Drakar (Xinghai) county in Tsolho (Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, has officially begun as part of the development plans for the Yangkhil (Yangqu) hydropower station, according to exile media outlet the [Tibet Times](#) on April 11. The monastery is being relocated to a site approximately 3 to 4 kilometers away from its current location to a hill in Khyokar Naklo.

Atsok Monastery, founded in 1889, currently accommodates 157 monks after restrictions were imposed in 2021, barring novice monks from enrolling in the monastery. Prior to the commencement of the relocation process, Chinese authorities announced the removal of Atsok Monastery from the list of recognized cultural and historical sites in the county.

The Yangkhil hydropower station located at the junction of Drakar county and Mangra (Guinan) county in the Tsolho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai province, built on the Machu (Yellow) River, is designed to produce 1.2 gigawatts of power.

According to China's [National Development and Reform Commission](#) project document dated November 2021, land acquisition covering an area of 80,691 mu (approximately 53 square kilometers) across 22 villages in three counties, including Drakar, will be undertaken, affecting 15,555 people. The project is scheduled to achieve operational readiness by the end of April 2024 and is projected to deliver over 40 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually to China's Central Plains region. The Electricity Engineering Construction Company of the Yellow River had been contracted for the construction, commencing site planning activities around Dec. 26, 2021.

7. Increased traffic at Tibet-Nepal border crossing

Chinese [state media](#) reported increased traffic at the Dram border, which connects Tibet and Nepal via the Nyalam Entry-Exit Border Inspection Station. According to reports, a total of 100,716 individuals and 4,450 vehicles have crossed the border since the beginning of the year, up to April 1, 2024.

This surge in traffic comes in the wake of the border's reopening on September 1 last year, following pandemic-related lockdown measures. Since then, a total of 234,634 people and 12,699 vehicles have crossed the border, as reported by Chinese state media.

Authorities have attributed the increase in traffic to heightened police deployment and expedited customs clearance processes for inbound and outbound passengers. While the traffic is largely associated with trade

activities, the Dram border has undergone substantial regulation and fortification in recent years to prevent any attempts by Tibetans to seek asylum abroad. As a result, the number of Tibetan refugees has drastically decreased by 99% since 2008.

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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