



ICT'S TIBET ROUNDUP — ISSUE 10

JUNE 1-15, 2024

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. Xi Jinping's Surprise Inspection Tour in Qinghai

On June 18, 2024, Xi Jinping, the President of China, embarked on a surprise inspection tour to Qinghai province, where he visited a Tibetan monastery and a boarding school in the provincial capital, Xining. This visit holds significant implications, particularly considering the international criticism surrounding Chinese boarding schools for Tibetans in recent years.

Chinese [state media](#) showcased a modern-looking boarding school, highlighting the Shanghai government's funding through the "paired assistance" program. However, despite attempts to deflect international criticism of erasing Tibetan language by emphasizing the teaching of Tibetan in these schools, the images released by state media contradicted this messaging.

Photographs from Xi's visit to a classroom revealed the dominance of the Chinese language, with charts on the walls and books on students' desks all written in Chinese. This boarding school caters to students from Tibetan pastoral communities in the Golog (Chinese: Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

During his inspection of the Tsongkha (Hongjue) monastery, Chinese state media reported Xi as saying that the monastery should "renew efforts to foster a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation and promote ethnic unity and progress." Under Xi's leadership, the Chinese government has been implementing policies aimed at "sinifying" Tibetan Buddhism, requiring Tibetan monasteries and monastics to hold the ideals of the Communist Party of China above religious teachings.

Another strong theme in Xi Jinping's messaging during this tour was the implementation of the policies of "high-quality development" adopted during the 20th Party Congress in October 2022, as well as the "protection of the ecology of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau." However, under the guise of "ecology protection," hundreds of thousands of Tibetan pastoral communities have experienced forced displacement, as reported by [Human Rights Watch](#) in its most recent report published last month.

This visit by Xi Jinping to a Tibetan boarding school and monastery in Qinghai highlights the ongoing tensions and concerns surrounding the Chinese government's policies towards Tibetan culture, language, and way of life. While state media portrays a narrative of progress and unity, the reality on the ground appears to contradict these claims.

2. Party Intensifies Political Control Over Tibetan Villages

Following the decisions made during the 20th Party Congress in October 2022, the Chinese Communist Party seems to be intensifying its efforts to extend political control and ideological influence down to the village level across the Tibet Autonomous Region under the "rural revitalization" policy label. According to a lengthy statement by Wang Junzheng published in the [Tibet Daily](#) on Jun 3, the Party has made stationing cadres in villages a "major decision" as part of strengthening grassroots governance and ensuring social stability. With more than 90% of the land in the officially designated Tibet Autonomous Region as agricultural and pastoral areas, and nearly 70% of the population as farmers and herdsmen, the policy aims to tighten political control by embedding Party cadres across Tibetan villages.

The village cadres are tasked with a wide range of responsibilities aimed at promoting Party theories, ethnic policies, and the "Sinicization" of Tibetan Buddhism among the rural masses. Their duties include strengthening political education, guiding the masses on the Party's ethnic and religious affairs policies, maintaining social stability through "grid management", and cracking down on any perceived "anti-secession" activities. Village cadres are also expected to push for rural revitalization, patriotic education campaigns, and even promotion of the standard Chinese language among Tibetan communities. Wang's statement stresses the need to "properly select, manage and utilize" these village cadres as an important talent pool for implementing the Party's agenda at the grassroots level across Tibet.

RELIGION

3. Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism

Chen Mingxiang, the Dingri (Tingri) County Party Secretary, recently visited Thoesangling Monastery under the guise of promoting the Party's ethnic and

religious policies as well as the “three consciousness” campaign, according to a [report](#) on June 6 released by United Front Work Department of Dingri County Committee of Shigatse City.

Chen explicitly called for adhering to the "Sinicization" of Tibetan Buddhism, a policy aimed at bringing the religion more in line with Chinese Communist Party principles and diminishing its distinct Tibetan identity. Chen demanded that the monastics "change their ideas" and approach religion more "rationally" according to Party ideology. He also ordered the monastery's management to “guide monks and nuns in the monastery to listen to the Party, feel the Party's kindness, and follow the Party”.

The requirement that monks and nuns must "listen to the Party" and put "national laws" above "religious rules" represents the CCP's continued attempt to subordinate Tibetan Buddhist teachings and practices to the diktats of the atheist Communist Party.

Overall, Chen's inspection aligns with the Chinese government's systematic attempts to indoctrinate Tibetan Buddhists with Party ideology, restrict religious practices, and bring monasteries under strict supervision and management by the atheist Communist regime.

4. Sinicization and Management of Tibetan Buddhism in Kardze

On June 4, Shenyang, the secretary of the Kardze (Ganzi) prefecture party committee, presided over a special meeting on Tibetan Buddhism in Chuktreng (Xiangcheng) County, as reported by state media [Ganzi Daily](#). He emphasized the importance of thoroughly studying and implementing Xi Jinping's key expositions on religious work, adhering to the Party's leadership over religious affairs, and following the Party Central Committee's directives on Sinicizing Tibetan Buddhism.

The meeting, attended by Zhang Tongrong, deputy secretary of the provincial party committee, and other key officials, featured reports from the party committees of Chuktreng, Dabpa (Daocheng), Derong and Bathang (Batang). Appearing satisfied with the work reports, Shenyang instructed continued efforts to guide Tibetan Buddhism to adapt to socialist society through the Sinicization process.

Shenyang called for enhanced capabilities in religious work, promotion of temple management to new levels, and adherence to the policies of forging a strong Chinese national community. He stressed the importance of uniting monks and religious figures around the Party and government by enhancing their "five identities" and maintaining legal governance of religious activities. He instructed a focus on risk assessment, legal education for religious believers, and the consolidation of grassroots party organizations in monasteries maintain control over religious work. The party secretary also

highlighted the necessity of integrating temple management into the broader goals of state stability and development, ensuring close cooperation among all levels of government and departments to implement the Party's directives effectively.

5. Demolition of Atsok Monastery: Restrictions and Displacement

The demolition of the 19th-century Atsok Monastery in Drakkar County, Tibet, has been accompanied by heightened restrictions on the local Tibetan population, according to a report by [Tibet Watch](#). Authorities have imposed stringent measures limiting internet access and movement, barring local Tibetans from taking or sharing photographs and videos of the demolition process and the construction of the Yangchu hydropower station.

Despite the ongoing demolition, resident monks have been forced to reside in temporary makeshift shelters, while the local public has been prohibited from visiting both the monastery and the planned relocation site. A Tibetan from Dekyi Village was arrested, interrogated, and detained in May for taking pictures of the demolition and sharing them along with an image of the Dalai Lama on WeChat.

According to Tibet Watch's sources, the construction at the relocation site for the monastery is not yet complete, although monks are currently living there in temporary makeshift iron shelters. Furthermore, all property belonging to the monastery has been stored in a warehouse of an animal husbandry village at Palkha Township.

DEVELOPMENT

6. Suining-Kardze Lithium Project

On June 6, a signing ceremony took place in Chengdu, promoting cooperation between Suining, a prefectural-level city in Sichuan, and the Tibetan region of Kardze (Ganzi), as well as the establishment of the Shengxin Lithium Energy (Shehong) lithium battery project, according to Chinese [state media report](#). The Suining Municipal Government and the Kardze Prefecture Government signed a supplementary agreement to the "Co-construction of Suining-Kardze Enclave Park Cooperation Agreement," facilitating joint recruitment and construction projects under the "enclave park + enclave enterprise" model.

This agreement raises significant concerns of the Chinese authorities ramping up lithium mining and processing activities in Nyagchukha (Yajiang) County within Kardze Prefecture. Chinese state media reported that the agreements pave the way for Shenzhen Shengtun Group Co., Ltd. to establish a massive mining project with an annual processing capacity of 2

million tons in Nyagchukha County, producing approximately 620,000 tons of lithium concentrate annually. This concentrate will then be used to build a 40,000-ton basic lithium salt project in the Lithium Battery High-tech Industrial Park in Shehong City.

7. Subsidy for “ecological protection”

Chinese [state media](#) touted the implementation of the grassland ecological protection subsidy and reward policy in Nagchu (Naqu) City, as a measure to protect the ecological environment and increase income for farmers and herders. While the policy promises an average annual subsidy of 1.05 billion yuan, potentially increasing cash income by around 2,080 yuan per household, the process has been marred by a top-down approach and lack of transparency. Despite Nagchu City's efforts to issue notices and allocate funds to counties and districts, the implementation process suggests a focus on meeting bureaucratic requirements rather than addressing the actual needs and concerns of the local Tibetan communities. The top-down approach risks undermining the touted ecological and livelihood objectives of the policy, as it overlooks the intricate relationship between Tibetan nomads and their grasslands, which has been shaped over centuries.

[Human Rights Watch](#) in its recent Tibet report found that the Chinese authorities are projected to have relocated over 930,000 rural Tibetans between 2000 and 2025. Alarming, over 709,000 Tibetans, or 76% of the total relocations, have taken place since January 2016 under policy labels like “ecology protection” or “targeted poverty alleviation”.

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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