



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

US report documents China's extreme isolation of Tibet

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A new State Department report says that Chinese security forces intimidated, monitored, and harassed Americans in Tibet – and that many diplomats, officials, journalists, and tourists were barred from entering Tibet at all.

A consistent theme is that the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) is uniquely subjected to wide-ranging restrictions on access. These restrictions are not in force in any other provincial-level entity in the People's Republic of China.

“The State Department’s report documents China’s efforts to lock diplomats, journalists, and American visitors out, and keep the Tibetan people locked in. The goal of this legislation is to open Tibet, and the administration should make greater use of sanctions to bring accountability to the Chinese officials responsible for these restrictions,” said Tencho Gyatso, president of International Campaign for Tibet.

Onerous restrictions

This is the sixth annual State Department report on access to Tibet. It notes that while the COVID-era restrictions on travel in other parts of the PRC eased, government regulations and procedures impeding travel to Tibet remain in place.

American officials are largely banned from entering Tibet. The report states that U.S. officials made three requests for official travel to the TAR in 2023, none of which were approved.

Diplomatic and official faced fewer formal restrictions on access to regions of Tibet outside the TAR, but PRC officials instead used conspicuous surveillance to intimidate, monitor, harass, and restrict travel to these areas.

The report also says that China’s decision to close the American consulate in Chengdu severely inhibits American diplomatic and official access to Tibet, with responsibility for these duties now placed some 800 miles away from Tibet in the embassy in Beijing.

Key findings

Other significant findings from the report include:

- During the reporting year, the U.S. mission personnel were unable to conduct any American Citizen Services visits to the TAR in 2023 because requests for visits by consular officers were not approved. No consular officer has visited the TAR since 2019.
- Access to these areas for journalists remained restricted and limited.

- When U.S. journalists gained access to Tibetan areas, the PRC government further suppressed their ability to report about Tibet by intimidating and preventing PRC citizens from interacting with foreign press. By hosting group tours, the government has been able to cite increased numbers and greater access to the region while maintaining strict control over the information conveyed.
- Tibetan Americans undergo a stricter screening process than other U.S. citizens when applying for PRC visas at PRC embassies. Tibetan Americans reported more frequent harassment by security officials in Tibetan areas than in other parts of China, including requirements to report to the local UFDW office where some were reportedly interrogated, threatened, and forced to download tracking software on their phones.
- Some members of the Tibetan American community reported they self-censored their behavior in the United States out of fear of retribution against their family members in Tibet or fear of losing future access to Tibet and threats from PRC officials.

Read the State Department report [here](#).



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