



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

China's hydropower dam expansion destroys Tibetan homes and temples, stands to displace 1.2 million people, and drives climate change

<http://www.savetibet.org/chinas-hydropower-dam-expansion-destroys-tibetan-homes-and-temples-stands-to-displace-1-2-million-people-and-drives-climate-change>

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A new International Campaign for Tibet report finds China's rapid hydropower dam scheme is causing irreparable damage to the Tibetan civilization, the environment, downstream nations, and the climate. Its agenda disregards the human impact, the science, and worsening climate change hydropower brings.

"The scale and scope of the PRC's hydropower dam spree is both unbelievable and unconscionable." said **Tencho Gyatso, President of the International Campaign for Tibet**. Adding "Beijing's disrespect for the Tibetan people's rights, its neighbors' fate, and the urgent moral and scientific demand to combat climate change could not be clearer. China must be stopped in its tracks and called to use its money, manpower, and innovation to advance solutions—not its political maneuvering."

Tibet's glacial peaks are the headwaters of the regions 8 major rivers. The reports rigorous research and advanced GIS mapping details the Chinese Communist Party's rampant construction of 100s of hydropower dams. This first-of-its-kind interactive map allows users to see the impact each dam will have on local populations, religious sites, and surrounding land cover. The report also presents alternatives that develop truly sustainable, renewable energy.

Key findings:

- If completed, 1.2 million residents living nearby dam projects could be dislocated from their homes, communities, and livelihoods. Religious and sacred sites serving communities will also be destroyed.
- Almost 80 per cent of dams studied are large or mega dams (>100MW), which carry the most significant risk to the Tibetan civilization, environmental sustainability, and the climate. However, over half the dams (60%) are either in proposal or preparation stage, presenting opportunities to change course.
- A truly sustainable pathway for the energy plan must account for the climate, social, environment, and geopolitical costs of hydropower and change course. No plan is sustainable without the consent, participation and co-management of local communities.
- Tibetans, who remain among the most politically marginalized in China, should not bear the highest cost to power China's industrial centers. Any long-term solution must involve a political solution where Tibetan people enjoy the right to freely decide how their natural resources are used. This begins with the PRC entering into a meaningful dialogue with representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Key Recommendations

- Cease all planning, proposing, and construction, including projects underway, of large-scale hydropower dams within Tibet.
- Protect the right of Tibetans to participate in all development projects as per the 1986 UN Declaration on the Right to Development and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including the right to free, prior, and informed consent. Stop the forcible dislocation of Tibetan communities.
- Invest in properly sited and inclusively developed solar and wind power, as they do not carry the demonstrable environmental, climate, and social costs of hydropower. These projects should prioritize co-management, co-benefits, and maintenance of traditional ways of life, and in particular, they should correspond to the needs of the local Tibetan population.
- If China is sincere in acting as a global leader, it is imperative to engage in multi-lateral transboundary water policy forums to establish a mutually beneficial management architecture and data sharing norms. Hydrological data and dam project plans should not be used as bargaining tools leveraged against downstream states.

[Read the full report along with all the key findings and recommendations here.](#)

[Access interactive map here.](#)



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