



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Xi Jinping in Lhasa, amid apparent lack of confidence in CCP's rule over Tibet

<http://www.savetibet.org/xi-jinping-in-lhasa-amid-apparent-lack-of-confidence-in-ccps-rule-over-tibet>

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Amid tightened security and increased repression, on August 20, Chinese leader Xi Jinping arrived in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, to attend a ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the so called "Tibet Autonomous Region" by the Chinese government.¹ The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) is alarmed at additional repressive measures against individual Tibetans, adding to the apparent lack of the CCP's confidence in its rule over Tibet.

Official Chinese state media, including the Global Times, have reported that Tibetans "warmly welcomed" Xi Jinping upon his arrival at Lhasa's Gonggar Airport.² However, what is notable is that authorities did not publicize the date of the celebrations until 8pm local time Wednesday, August 20, just 12 hours before the ceremony scheduled for 10am Thursday, August 21, 2025.³ The caution reflects government insecurity, which has been observed by two sources inside Tibet who reported that the city has been under heavy scrutiny for the past few days. The sources described a significant deployment of armed military personnel and a strict security presence. Additionally, former political prisoners and other "suspicious" individuals have been placed under house arrest and are completely restricted from leaving their homes. Another source residing in Nepal added that since August 15, the Chinese government has closed off major pilgrimage sites such as the Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple to visitors. All streets in front of the Potala Palace have also been blocked.

An unprecedented visit

This is Xi Jinping's second visit to Lhasa since becoming president.⁴ His first visit was in 2021 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of what China calls the "peaceful liberation of Tibet." This marks the first time the Chairman of the Central Military Commission and General Party Secretary of the Communist Party of China has personally attended a founding anniversary of Tibet or other

¹ Government of People's Republic of China, 20 August 2025, '快讯：习近平率中央代表团抵拉萨出席西藏自治区成立60周年庆祝活动' ('Breaking News: Xi Jinping leads a central delegation to Lhasa to attend celebrations marking the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region'), https://www.gov.cn/yaowen/liebiao/202508/content_7037229.htm.

² Global Times, 20 August 2025, 'Xi arrives in Lhasa for celebrations of 60th founding anniversary of Xizang Autonomous Region', <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202508/1341310.shtml>.

³ CCTV, 20 August 2025, '西藏自治区成立60周年庆祝大会21日上午在拉萨举行 习近平将出席大会' ('A grand celebration marking the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region will be held in Lhasa on the morning of August 21st. Xi Jinping will attend'), <https://news.cctv.com/2025/08/20/ARTIz0kk1D44mVRR1LsCVDaV250820.shtml>.

⁴ International Campaign for Tibet, 22 July 2021, 'China's president makes surprise visit to Tibet', <https://savetibet.org/chinas-president-makes-surprise-visit-to-tibet/>.

autonomous regions such as East Turkestan (Xinjiang) and Mongolia. Hong Kong is however one high profile exception due to its special status.

Official Chinese media outlets also reported that this time, Xi Jinping was accompanied by a notably high-ranking delegation with Wang Huning, Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and Cai Qi, Director of the General Office of the CPC Central Committee.

Information about Xi Jinping's visit is being strategically and heavily spread across Chinese government-affiliated social media platforms. In the comments section of a videos, many Chinese internet users have posted remarks such as: "Xi Jinping's visit to Tibet is for the future happiness of the Tibetan people, so Tibetans, 'get on with it!'" Another user commented on the need for national unity and solidarity, while another one wished for the prosperity and peace of the motherland. These and other political slogans and propaganda-filled comments have been widely posted to set the public narrative.

"This unprecedented and high-ranking delegation to Tibet on the 60th anniversary of the creation of a so-called Tibet Autonomous Region reflects China's deep insecurity in Tibet and need to perform leadership and assert their authority in Tibet", said Tencho Gyatso, ICT President. "The irony of this anniversary is that the celebrations must occur in secrecy without public announcements of the celebration time and strict controls on public activities. As we await the staged speeches and performances to come, it is important to remember that Xi Jinping is in Tibet to project strength, stability, and legitimacy on the 60th anniversary of the creation of a Tibetan 'Autonomous' Region that denied Tibetans autonomy at its inception and is now even working to erase Tibet by replacing the name 'Tibet' with its Chinese term 'Xizang'. Tibet remains the constant reminder to the world that China offers a dysfunctional, immoral and fragile governance model that rules by fear."



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