



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### **New ICT report documents pattern of Tibetan deaths in China's custody**

<https://savetibet.org/new-ict-report-documents-pattern-of-tibetan-deaths-in-chinas-custody>

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The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) today released *[Justice Denied: The Pattern of Deaths in and After Custody in Tibet](#)*, a report documenting at least 16 cases of Tibetans who died in Chinese detention or shortly after release between 2014 and 2026. ICT is publishing the report to coincide with the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture on June 26, both to commemorate the day and to speak out and seek justice for Tibetan victims who have died at the hands of Chinese authorities.

The report finds that these deaths are not isolated tragedies but evidence of a Chinese justice system that condones and perpetuates impunity for public security authorities who have tortured and abused Tibetan victims. Across cases drawn from different parts of Tibet, a consistent pattern emerges: individuals are taken into custody, often without access to lawyers or family; held where there is little or no outside oversight; and subjected to abuse, ill-treatment, or denial of medical care. Some die in detention, while others are released only when their condition has deteriorated beyond recovery, returned to families injured, unconscious, or unable to speak, and die days later.

Among those documented are Tsedon, a 20-year-old university student in Lhasa who died within weeks of her detention; Geshe Pende Gyaltzen, a respected monk and community mediator; Gonpo Namgyal, a village leader and advocate for Tibetan-language education whose body bore signs of abuse; and Tulku Hungkar Dorje Rinpoche, a revered spiritual teacher who disappeared into custody in Vietnam, died under unclear circumstances, and was cremated at night without his family's consent.

After the deaths of victims, the report finds the pattern of impunity and lack of justice for victims and their families continues. Bodies are withheld or cremated under strict state control, families are denied access and blocked from performing religious rites, no independent autopsies are conducted, and no accountability follows. ICT's report concludes that the recurrence of these deaths, combined with the consistent failure to investigate or provide redress, meets the threshold for systematic torture under the Convention against Torture, to which China is a State Party.

The report aligns with earlier findings of a 2015 ICT-report documenting 29 known cases of torture between 2008 and 2014, among which were 14 Tibetans who died while detained or immediately after release. The number of cases of torture in custody are likely to be much higher, as the Chinese government systematically blocks access to Tibet and monitors and criminalizes Tibetans who send information related to Beijing's repressive policies out of Tibet.

"In Tibet, imprisonment may amount to a death sentence. As our report documents, in many cases it does," said ICT President Tencho Gyatso. "These are not isolated tragedies. They reveal a systematic pattern in which Tibetans are taken into custody and do not come back alive. On this International Day Against Torture, we honor every Tibetan who has died in Chinese custody, and we demand the truth, justice, and accountability that has been denied for far too long to their families."

The report calls on governments to raise individual cases and press for prompt, independent investigations; to demand unfettered access to Tibet for UN monitors, diplomats, and journalists; to condemn reprisals against grieving families; and to consider targeted sanctions against officials implicated in deaths in custody, torture, and enforced disappearance. It urges the Chinese government to investigate all allegations of torture, prosecute those responsible, and guarantee victims and their families effective remedies. It further calls on the United Nations to explicitly address deaths in custody in Tibet as part of a broader pattern of torture, discrimination, and impunity.



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