



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

“Baptism of youth”: China continues to subject Tibetan children to military – style training and political indoctrination

<https://savetibet.org/baptism-of-youth-china-continues-to-subject-tibetan-children-to-military-style-training-and-political-indoctrination>

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A recent [Chinese state-media report](#) shows Tibetan children in the eastern Tibetan town of Dartsedo (Chinese: Kangding), Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan province being subjected to a five-day training program combining instruction on “school rules and behavioral norms” with military-style drills and political indoctrination sessions.

Images published with the report show Tibetan middle school students dressed in military-style uniforms and participating in marching and formation drills and other training. The children were also subjected to ideological education which included sessions on “fostering ethnic unity.” The students appear to be middle school students who had only recently completed elementary school.

The Chinese state media report described the activities carried out in this program as “moral education courses” aimed at cultivating a strong sense of “patriotism” and “ethnic unity”. It reported that children sang political songs such as “Without the Communist Party, There Would Be No New China”, and internalized the ideals of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and ethnic unity.

The images and accompanying account provide another disturbing example of the increasing incorporation of military-style discipline and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) ideology into the education of Tibetan children.

ICT is deeply concerned by the Chinese government’s accelerated deployment of military education and political indoctrination involving Tibetan children and condemns these practices.

“This is not simply children learning ‘school rules’. Tibetan children are being put in military uniforms, drilled in formation and immersed in CCP ideology at an age when they should be free to learn their own language and practice their own religion, culture, and traditions,” said Tencho Gyatso, President, International Campaign for Tibet.

“When the CCP boasts of ‘baptizing’ Tibetan children through this kind of training, it reveals the disturbing purpose behind it: turning education into an instrument of forced assimilation and as a means to erase Tibetan identity. Such abuses must end,” she added.

ICT has previously [reported](#) on the CCP’s systematic militarization and indoctrination of Tibetan children. Similar images showed Tibetan kindergarten children marching in military uniforms and carrying imitation rifles. This latest report and the images with it is further evidence of how the CCP is forcefully introducing and subjecting Tibetan children to military training and intensive ideological programming.

China has long pursued the erasure of Tibetan culture through forced assimilation policies and its vast state-run [boarding schools](#), forcibly separating Tibetan children from their families and preventing them from learning or speaking Tibetan. This violates Tibetan children’s basic rights and threatens the very survival of Tibetan culture and identity.

The treatment of Tibetan children will receive renewed international scrutiny as China enters its next reporting cycle before the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Committee is scheduled to consider a list of issues concerning China during its pre-session working group from Sept. 29 to Oct. 2, 2026, in which ICT will be participating.

The upcoming review of states’ compliance with the UN Child Rights Convention is, therefore, an opportunity for the international community to hold China accountable for the human rights abuses committed against Tibetan children.

The CCP's systematic oppression of Tibetan children's rights to freedom of speech, information, religion, culture and family unity is a direct violation of the Convention.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child already found in [2013](#) that China's education policies discriminated against Tibetan children. However, China has made no changes and continues to institutionalize violations of Tibetan children's rights. To uphold the strength of international law, these abuses against children must be addressed and prevented.

ICT calls on the Chinese government to end coercive political indoctrination and military-style training of Tibetan children and to ensure that Tibetan children can fully exercise their rights to their own language, religion, culture, education and way of life.

The international community, including the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, should press Chinese authorities to provide transparent information about the scope and content of military-style and political education in Tibetan schools and to bring education policies in Tibetan areas into compliance with international human rights standards.



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