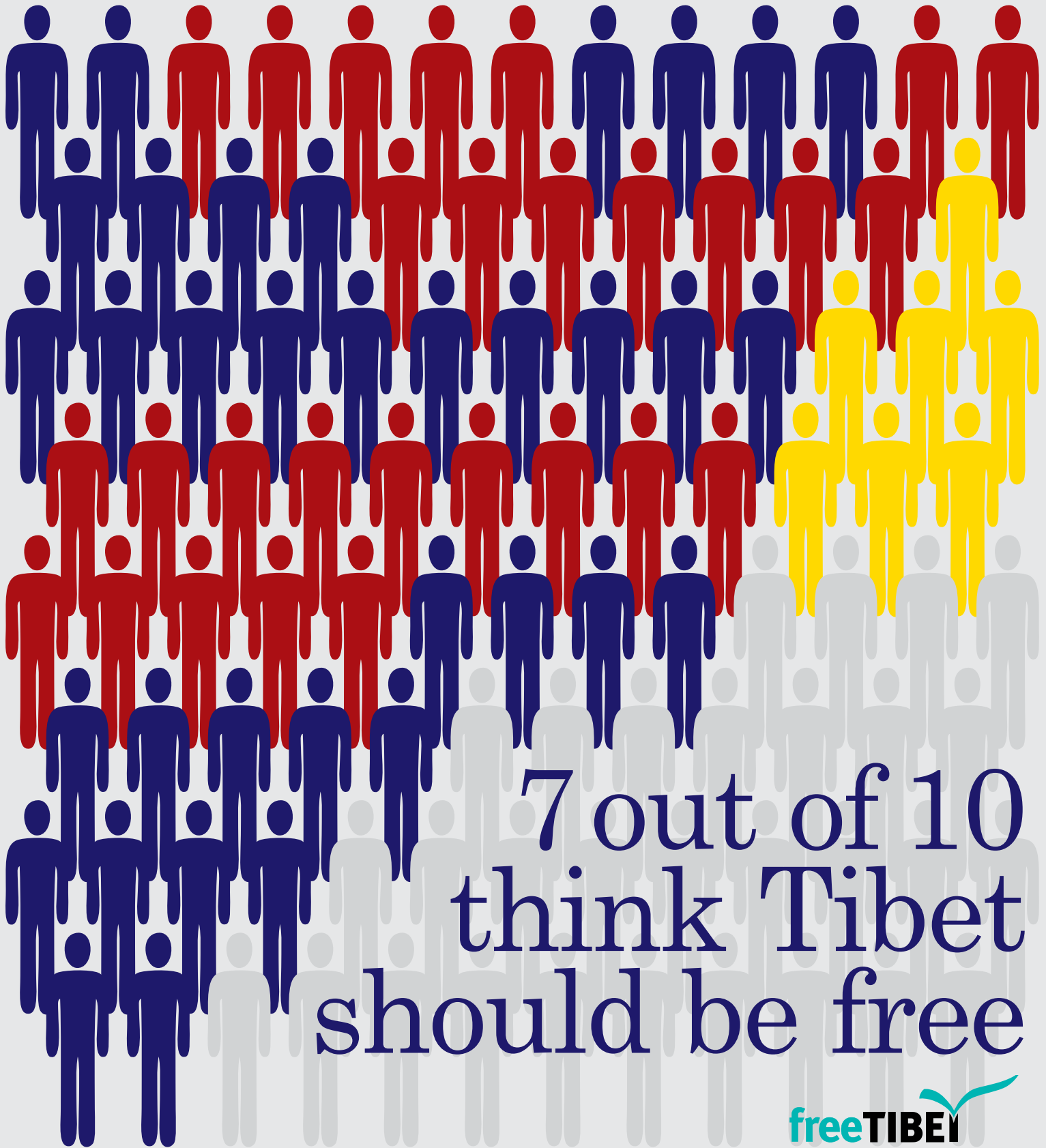


FREE TIBET

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www.freetibet.org



7 out of 10
think Tibet
should be free

freeTIBET 



Free Tibet Director Stephanie Brigden

Dear friends

As we prepare to commemorate Tibetans' struggle for freedom this March, it is encouraging to know we have the great British public behind us – 76% of British people believe Tibet should be free. And the Brits are not alone! See across the page for more.

There are several activities you can be involved in to show your support, from rallies in London to an unusual event in Scotland (pages 6-7). Or why not sponsor a Tibetan flag? We hope to have hundreds flying. We hope this visual act of solidarity will prompt public awareness among people who may only know a little about Tibet but who will want to know more when they realise this striking flag cannot be raised in Tibet.

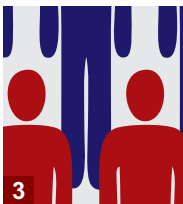
Free Tibet works tirelessly to expose the everyday realities of living under occupation. Last year thousands of Tibetan students protested for the right to be educated in their own language. We broke this news, guaranteeing the Tibetan students' cries were heard across the world (see page 10). In December, through the United Nations, we helped to hold China accountable for forced Tibetan

nomadic resettlement, one of the greatest expulsions of a people from their land in history (page 9).

Thousands of you already support our work and more people join every day. When renewing your membership or donating to Free Tibet please consider making your contribution through a direct debit. A donation of even £2 per month makes a real difference. By giving through a monthly or annual direct debit it reduces our costs, our environmental footprint and more of your money goes into campaigning. A form is enclosed with this magazine or you can set up a direct debit securely online through our website.

Thank you for all your support and we look forward to seeing you soon!

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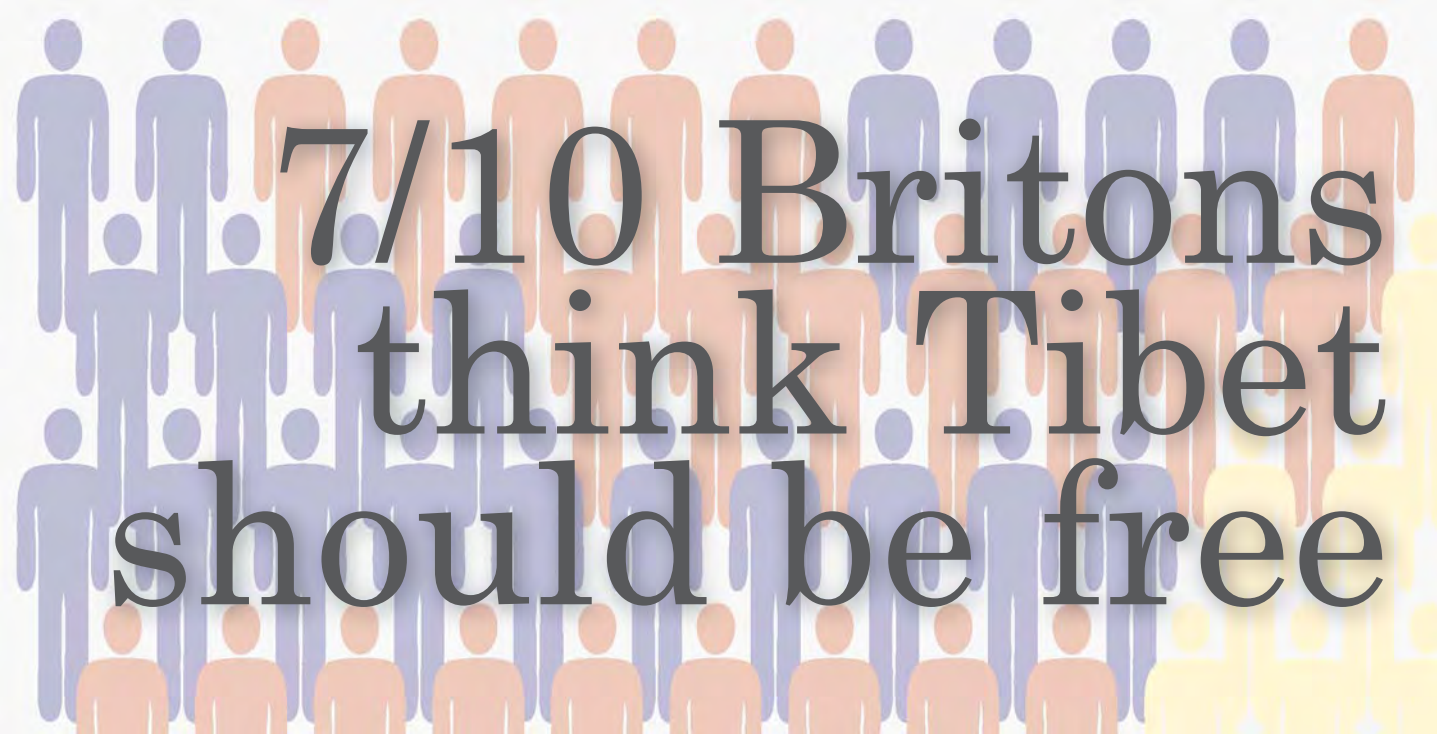


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Free Tibet stands for the right of Tibetans to determine their own future. It campaigns for an end to China's occupation of Tibet and for the fundamental human rights of Tibetans to be respected. Founded in 1987, Free Tibet generates active support by education about the situation in Tibet. It is independent of all governments and is funded by its members and supporters. Views expressed in *Free Tibet* are not necessarily those of Free Tibet.

Editor: Vivienne Briscoe
Design & layout: Catherine Quine
Print: Crucial Colour

Cover: Free Tibet poll results



7/10 Britons think Tibet should be free

The results show the massive level of support for Free Tibet's mission – to stand for the right of Tibetans to determine their own future and the end of China's brutal occupation of Tibet.

Seventy six per cent of British adults think Tibet should be free, an ICM opinion poll commissioned by Free Tibet reveals. By contrast, a mere three in every hundred think that Tibet should continue to be ruled by China. These results show the massive level of support for Free Tibet's mission – to stand for the right of Tibetans to determine their own future and the end of China's brutal occupation of Tibet.

In the United States a CNN poll in 2010 revealed a level of support for a free Tibet similar to that in the UK, with 73 per cent of respondents thinking Tibet should be an independent country.

A survey of Free Tibet members has also demonstrated the overarching importance to our supporters of ending China's occupation of Tibet, with two thirds of Free Tibet members giving the occupation as their main concern about Tibet.

A global movement

Free Tibet is a growing organisation: somebody joins Free Tibet every single day and we have members in every continent. The number of Life Members has also been growing steadily since we introduced this level of membership nearly two years ago, illustrating the deep commitment of many of our members.

Support for China is on the decline worldwide, with global public opinion of

China falling steadily over the last five years. This decline exists despite China's increasing efforts to promote itself and create an internationally appealing 'nation brand'.

The 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing were the ultimate exercise in soft power, planned to demonstrate the positive role China could play on the international stage. However, the protests in Tibet in 2008 and the manner in which they were put down reversed any potential impact of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games on world public opinion; nearly three years on China continues to fail.

According to an annual BBC World Service poll the percentage of people who think China's influence in the world is positive has been in steady decline since 2005, with a sharp decline in 2008 from which it has not recovered. Until China ends its brutal occupation of Tibet, it will not be able to create positive public opinion around the world.

Action

Support the growing movement for a free Tibet by setting up a regular gift to help our work. A regular gift by direct debit reduces our administrative costs and so means that more of your money goes directly into our work for Tibetans in Tibet. Please contact the office on 020 7324 4605

 www.freetibet.org/support

Two thirds of Free Tibet members give the Chinese occupation as their main concern about Tibet

The Chinese occupation imposes itself on all areas of life for Tibetans in Tibet. It limits what you can do, what you can say and where you can go. It has had a terrible impact on both the natural and man-made environments of Tibet. Some of the manifestations of occupation are obvious to even the most casual observer; others eat away more subtly, but no less devastatingly, at the fabric of Tibetans' lives.

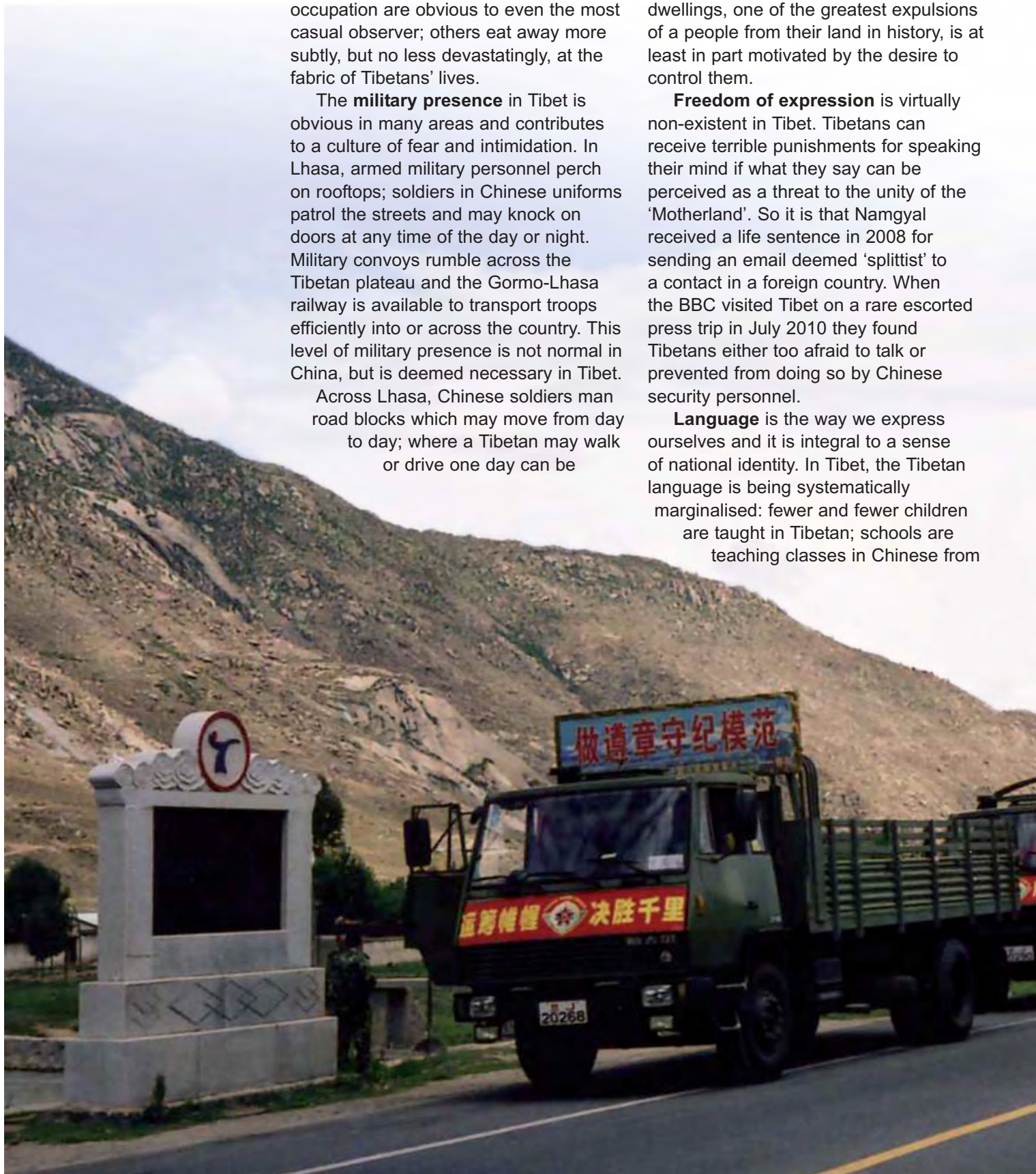
The **military presence** in Tibet is obvious in many areas and contributes to a culture of fear and intimidation. In Lhasa, armed military personnel perch on rooftops; soldiers in Chinese uniforms patrol the streets and may knock on doors at any time of the day or night. Military convoys rumble across the Tibetan plateau and the Gormo-Lhasa railway is available to transport troops efficiently into or across the country. This level of military presence is not normal in China, but is deemed necessary in Tibet.

Across Lhasa, Chinese soldiers man road blocks which may move from day to day; where a Tibetan may walk or drive one day can be

inaccessible on the next, with no warning or reason. This restriction of **freedom of movement**, within towns and between different areas of Tibet, enables the authorities to keep tighter control over people. The policy of forcing nomads to stop seasonal grazing and settle in fixed dwellings, one of the greatest expulsions of a people from their land in history, is at least in part motivated by the desire to control them.

Freedom of expression is virtually non-existent in Tibet. Tibetans can receive terrible punishments for speaking their mind if what they say can be perceived as a threat to the unity of the 'Motherland'. So it is that Namgyal received a life sentence in 2008 for sending an email deemed 'splittist' to a contact in a foreign country. When the BBC visited Tibet on a rare escorted press trip in July 2010 they found Tibetans either too afraid to talk or prevented from doing so by Chinese security personnel.

Language is the way we express ourselves and it is integral to a sense of national identity. In Tibet, the Tibetan language is being systematically marginalised: fewer and fewer children are taught in Tibetan; schools are teaching classes in Chinese from



an ever earlier age; the language of commerce is increasingly Chinese; the language of administrative and legal procedures is Chinese. Recent events in Jyekundo (Chinese:Yushu) exemplify this trend. Jyekundo is a town whose population is 97 per cent Tibetan. Following a devastating earthquake last April, the authorities chose to announce reconstruction plans using only Chinese language posters, despite the fact that most Tibetans in this area cannot read Chinese. This policy of one language for 'One China' is part of China's strategy to cement its occupation of Tibet.

Buddhism is at the heart of Tibetan identity. It defines most Tibetans and distinguishes them from the atheist Chinese communist state. Today in Tibet there are many outward signs of a thriving religion, but the complex system of Chinese administrative controls and restrictions make it virtually impossible for Tibetans to practise their religion in a meaningful way. The Chinese state also runs a programme known as 'patriotic re-education' as a means to control the influence of Buddhism in Tibet. In this compulsory programme Tibetan Buddhists are forced to denounce their spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, who they hold as sacred, and are made to swear allegiance to the State and the Communist Party. Worship of the Dalai Lama is forbidden and may be heavily punished in a futile

attempt to extinguish a powerful inner torch of Tibetan identity.

A fundamental threat to the Tibetan identity of Tibet itself comes from a Chinese policy that has for many years offered financial and other incentives to non-Tibetan ethnic groups to move into Tibet. The overall effect of this policy is to marginalise Tibetans in Tibet. Business norms are increasingly Chinese, and in such an environment Tibetans often struggle to compete on an equal footing with well-educated immigrant Han Chinese.

The **plundering of Tibet's vast natural resources** by the Chinese state without the free, prior and informed consent of the Tibetan people is devastating the plateau, known in China as the 'Western Treasure House'. Water is being diverted from Tibet for the rest of China without care for the source; mining and logging have destabilised the plateau's environment to the financial gain of China, not Tibetans.

The Chinese Communist Party's ruthless determination to integrate Tibet and Tibetans into the 'Motherland' spawns the human rights violations in Tibet. The Chinese regime works relentlessly to enforce loyalty to 'One China' and to eradicate loyalty to a distinct Tibetan identity, which is seen as a threat to the Chinese state.

Action

Join supporters of Tibet from around the country in a mass lobby for Tibet.

Demand action from your MP on Tibet! Join us at the Houses of Parliament or at your MP's office in your constituency and lobby your MP in person. If you cannot be there on 10 March, please email, fax or telephone your MP to make sure they are committed to supporting Tibetan freedom!

Be part of the mass lobby: for more information and for a lobby pack call 020 7324 4605 or visit the website.

 www.freetibet.org/campaigns

Army convoy
5km west of Tolung, Tibet

Living under occupation

Get involved

Raise a flag for Tibet

The colourful and distinctive Tibetan flag is an important symbol of the Tibetan nation and their struggle for freedom. This year we are asking our supporters to sponsor a Tibetan flag as a symbol of solidarity with Tibetans. We can raise this flag freely, but Tibetans in Tibet are denied the right to do this and risk imprisonment for such a simple action. Palijor Norbu, a Tibetan man in his eighties, was arrested and sentenced to seven years imprisonment in Lhasa in 2008 for printing the Tibetan flag.

Sponsor a flag for Tibet

On behalf of Tibetans who cannot fly the Tibetan national flag, Free Tibet hopes to fly hundreds of Tibetan flags in the Tibetan Peace Gardens in central London this year. We would love all our supporters to get behind this action by sponsoring a flag to be raised. As we will be flying the flags in a public space in central London they will act as a great tool to raise awareness, and of course the more flags that are flown the bigger the impact will be. All proceeds raised from this initiative will be invested in Free Tibet's campaigning work.

About the Tibetan flag

The design of today's Tibetan national flag was produced by the thirteenth Dalai Lama and adopted in 1912. The white mountain represents the land of Tibet and the two snow lions on either side symbolise the sacred and secular realms. The coloured stripes also hold specific meanings: the red stripes represent the six original tribes of Tibet, the blue stripes symbolise Tibet's commitment to spiritual and



secular rule. Lastly, the three yellow borders which frame the flag represent Buddha's teachings.

Raise the flag in your community

Flying the Tibetan flag is an easy way to raise awareness in your local community – display a Tibetan flag window-sticker (available from Free Tibet) in your home or car, or bring a flag to public events such as festivals and concerts. Some of Free Tibet's local groups work with their councils to raise the Tibetan flag outside their Town Hall, church or other public building. Free Tibet supporter Nick took the national flag to the Last Night of the Proms where many attendees asked about it and were curious to learn more about Tibet. If you would like to join Nick at the 2011 proms or want support to raise local media coverage for your flag initiative, please contact Free Tibet on 020 7324 4605.

Action

To sponsor a flag for Tibet please complete the form on the cover letter and return it to us in the Freepost envelope or call 020 7324 4605.



www.freetibet.org/support

Join us on 10 March

Three hundred thousand Tibetans surrounded the Dalai Lama's official residency in Lhasa on 10 March 1959, fearful that the Chinese intended to kidnap His Holiness. Over the following weeks, thousands of Tibetans took to the streets to protest against Chinese rule. Over 86,000 Tibetans were killed in a matter of days when the Chinese forces resorted to violence to disperse the crowds.

Every year, we mark the anniversary of the 10 March Uprising with a series of events, making sure that the courage of Tibetans who fight against Chinese occupation is not forgotten. These events offer a wonderful opportunity to actively show your support for a free Tibet. This year, Free Tibet invites you to get involved in the following activities.

10 March 2011: Mass lobby of MPs

Demand action from your MP on Tibet! Free Tibet supporters successfully secured the support of hundreds of parliamentary candidates last year; it is now time to ensure that your elected members of parliament are working hard to help secure the human rights of Tibetans.

Join us at the Houses of Parliament or at your MP's office in your constituency and lobby your MP in person. If you cannot be there on 10 March, please email, fax or telephone your MP to make sure they are committed to supporting Tibetan freedom!

Be part of the mass lobby: for more information and for a lobby pack, call 020 7324 4605 or visit the website.



12 March 2011: Uprising rally

March through central London. Bring your Tibetan flag along and help Free Tibet colour the streets of London in red, blue and yellow! (Route to be confirmed.) For further details, contact sophie@freetibet.org or visit the website.



www.freetibet.org/campaigns

Free Tibet would like to thank our new Life Members: Hamish Fulton, Beryl Parr, J H F Green, Dr Richard Kimberlein, OBE



Help the dream of a free Tibet

We all dream of the day when Tibetans will live in freedom in their own country, able to practise their religion freely and with equal rights and opportunities. We firmly believe that the day is drawing closer but we also realise that it will take time.

If you would like your commitment to Tibetan freedom and human rights to live on, please consider leaving a legacy to Free Tibet.

For information about leaving a gift in your will to support Free Tibet's vital work, please contact Julia: 020 7324 4605 or julia@freetibet.org



Your gift can help future generations of Tibetans

Limited edition merchandise

Free Tibet is pleased to launch its new t-shirt and mug for 2011 based on the Auspicious Symbols – a beautiful and unique design. These items are limited edition so make sure you get yours before they sell out! The t-shirt is priced at £20 and made from sustainable bamboo (so soft!). The mug is priced at £6.50. All proceeds go to Free Tibet.

About the Auspicious Symbols

The design was produced by Free Tibet supporter Wangchen who has used the Buddhist iconography of the eight Auspicious Symbols, commonly found across Tibet. The symbols are called:

Protection Parasol, Golden Fish, Great Treasure Vase, Conch Shell, White Lotus, Knot of Eternity, Banner of Victory, Dharma Wheel

The Auspicious Symbols are regarded as sacred with each one representing an aspect of Buddhist teachings. Each symbol has its own meaning, for example the Golden Fish represents happiness and freedom. It is believed that the symbols bring good fortune and when depicted as a group of eight their powers are said to multiply. In Tibet these symbols feature in architecture, are found adorning temples and decorating homes.

To get your mug and t-shirt please visit the website, call 020 7324 4605 or send your order by post using the enclosed Freepost envelope stating the quantity, name and address for delivery. Please add £2 to your order to cover postage and packing.



www.freetibet.org/shop



Raffle 2010

Last year's raffle raised over £20,000 for Free Tibet. As all the prizes were kindly donated this means that all the proceeds can be invested in Free Tibet's campaigning work. This would not be possible without the generosity of our supporters. Thank you to everyone who bought tickets. Our prize winners, many of whom were long-term Free Tibet supporters, were delighted. Congratulations to 2010's lucky winners!

1st Prize: 063202 **A D Jones**
2nd Prize: 079151 **Mrs Edwards**
3rd Prize: 192761 **K A Loder**
4th Prize: 175816 **Richard Hurst**
5th Prize: 278245 **A D Jones**
6th Prize: 058427 **Heather Rawlinson**
7th Prize: 062354 **P Tan**
8th Prize: 050373 **R C Cowen**
Runners up:
133130 **Jonathan Pope**
123602, 288893



STOP PRESS!

Are you based in Scotland? Do you want to be part of a fun, peaceful, public media stunt? Please send your name and contact details to sophie@freetibet.org. More info soon!

Torture: Namgyal's story

“During my time in detention those of us who got tortured had promised each other that whoever got released would seek help from the international community so that the rest of the prisoners can be free from torture.”

The above statement is from Namgyal, 37, a monk whose torture is one of the most harrowing cases we have encountered.

Namgyal was detained and accused of attempting to organise a protest in Kandze Town in March 2008, just a week after mass protests broke out in Lhasa. The accusations were based on transcripts of conversations he had had with his friends. It was clear that the police had intercepted his phone calls. Namgyal was tortured repeatedly in order to extract a confession from him.

“Whenever they thought I was not telling the truth, the interrogator displayed a handcuff, an electric baton and a handgun on the desk and asked me: ‘Which would you like to choose? Confession or tools?’”

Namgyal was poked with a sharp metal spear that pierced his flesh; he was shocked with electric batons, hung from a door frame and immersed in

freezing water; he was beaten and kicked and had a gun held to his forehead.

“The policemen ordered me to stretch my hands out and lean on the wall. They put an electric stove between the wall and me. It was very hot. I felt I was going to burn. When I tried to move, the policeman pushed against my back. I could not bear the heat anymore and almost fell on the stove. Then they pulled me up from behind before I fell on the stove. They threw cold water on me. It was extremely painful. My body felt like it was burning up. They kicked me back and forth between the two of them...”

While Namgyal was enduring torture in Tibet, Free Tibet was presenting evidence to the United Nations Committee Against Torture to highlight the widespread and routine use of torture in Tibet. We continue to lobby decision-makers and we can



Namgyal was tortured whilst in detention

report that the UK government raised the subject of torture during the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue that took place in January 2011. We are also working with Taiwanese supporters to launch the Stop Torture in Tibet website in Chinese, hoping to engage and influence China's youth who will be shaping the future of China and arguably Tibet. To learn more about our work and for simple ideas to help stop torture in Tibet please visit our website.



www.freetibet.org/campaigns

Writers sentenced

Three young writers have been imprisoned for 'inciting splittism'. According to a local source, Jangtse Dhonkho and Buddha were sentenced to four years and Kelsang Jinpa to three years in prison. The writers were put on trial on charges of 'inciting splittism' for articles they published in a popular Tibetan journal, *Shar Dungri* (Eastern Snow Mountain) in 2008, shortly after the March protests. It is reported that the writers were sentenced on 30 December 2010, with the defendants and their lawyers being denied the opportunity to speak in court.

Tibetans in Tibet have responded in different ways to the brutal crackdown on protestors in 2008 and the ongoing arrests and intimidation of those who speak about human rights

abuses. Some Tibetans have learnt to censor themselves, staying silent, even among themselves, about the situation in Tibet. For others, such as these writers, the severity of China's response to Tibetan dissent has enraged and emboldened them and people from all walks of life have become more outspoken.

The writings of Jangtse Dhonkho, Buddha and Kelsang Jinpa were the first known articles published on the mass protests in 2008. Following their publication, *Shar Dungri* was quickly banned by the Chinese administration. Copies of the articles are now being read by Tibetans in exile and more widely.

The essays give personal accounts from the 2008 protests, including vivid accounts of a man beaten to death in



Imprisoned writer Buddha

Ngaba and the suicide of two young monks from Kandze monastery. The articles also challenge Chinese state propaganda about the impact of modernisation and development in Tibet. Buddha wrote: **“If the living standards of Tibetans had really improved so much, why would they feel so unhappy?”**

UN calls on China to stop forced resettlement of nomads

In December 2010 a United Nations expert (known as a United Nations Special Rapporteur) visited China to investigate and report on people's right to food and land. This gave Free Tibet an opportunity to bring the plight of Tibetan nomads to the attention of the United Nations.

Prior to his visit, Free Tibet submitted a report to the Special Rapporteur, Olivier de Schutter, with information that allowed him to question Chinese officials about forced nomadic resettlement during his visit. We are happy to report back that in his preliminary findings, released in December, the Special Rapporteur called on China to stop the forced resettlement of nomads.

China's policy of forcing Tibetan nomads to leave their herds, their nomadic tent homes and the land they have roamed for centuries is one of the greatest expulsions of a people from their land in history. The numbers of people being removed from their land and the way in which they are being moved is compared by experts to the inhumane treatment of Australian Aboriginals or North American Indians by nineteenth century European colonialists.

Based on figures in Chinese state media we know that by 2009 close to one million Tibetan nomads had been forced from their land. The nomads are not consulted in the process and are left without the means to make a living. With their land leases cancelled, there is little prospect of ever returning to their land.

The Chinese government claims that they are moving the nomads because the nomadic grazing practices are causing damage to the Tibetan plateau's environment. However, recent scientific research

confirms that nomadic practices actually maintain biodiversity on the plateau and keep the grasslands strong and healthy. Research also demonstrates how Chinese government agricultural and resource extraction policies (mining, damming and logging) over many decades have led to the deterioration of the ecology of the plateau.



Cameron betrayed his electorate

Last November the Prime Minister, David Cameron, travelled to China on a so-called 'super-trade mission'. This was his first visit to China since becoming Prime Minister.

Given China's poor human rights record in Tibet and the coalition government's manifesto commitment to 'seek a closer engagement with China, while standing firm on human rights', Free Tibet was outraged by Cameron's silence on human rights when he was in China. By turning a blind eye to very serious human rights concerns Cameron has betrayed both the British public and the people who are repressed by the Chinese regime.

The weekend before Cameron travelled to China, Free Tibet commissioned a public opinion poll that reveals how very important human rights are to the British public: three quarters of us think that protecting human rights in Tibet is at least as important as maintaining good trade relations with China; over one third of us think that human rights are more important than trade. In addition, three thousand people signed Free Tibet's online petition asking Cameron to stand up for human rights in Tibet during his visit. Thank you to all of you who went online and signed.

The UK-China Human Rights Dialogue that Cameron used to excuse his silence took place last month and arguably failed to be any more than a box-ticking exercise, aimed at appeasing the British public.

To add insult to injury, recent Wikileaks cables have revealed that past trade negotiations with China have not gone well; talks in 2008 were described by the economic officer at the Beijing Embassy as a "bloody disaster". This time round things have not gone much better; Chinese diplomats bluntly said that that there was very little China wished to buy from the UK.

Tibetan students protest for their rights

The streets of the UK have recently witnessed protests by thousands of British students challenging the government's education policies. Similarly, Tibetan students have been out in force to protest about proposed changes to their education. However, there is one glaring difference. Whilst the students from Britain protest about their right to a free education, those in Tibet protested about something far more fundamental: the right to an education in their own language.

On 19 October 2010, Free Tibet received information that over 6,000 Tibetan students were marching through the streets of Rongwo town. Over the following days the protests spread to several counties in eastern Tibet and even to Beijing. Free Tibet managed to secure extensive media coverage of these events, bringing the issue to international awareness.



Tibetan students, some as young as 12 years old, protest in Rebkong, Tibet, 19 October 2010

The Chinese educational reforms which sparked the protests stipulate that all school subjects be taught in Chinese and all textbooks be in the Chinese language. Many students in the areas where reforms are set to take place come from nomadic communities. They are unfamiliar with the Chinese language and would therefore be unable to study in it.

The protests, the largest since 2008, underline how important the Tibetan language is to the Tibetan people. The systematic erosion of the Tibetan language by the Chinese administration represents part of China's larger strategy to cement its occupation in Tibet. The protests are not merely against the use of Mandarin, but are part of the struggle against Chinese occupation and the oppression which blights the everyday lives of Tibetans.

The disastrous effects of Chinese language policies have been witnessed in areas of Tibet where the reforms have already been implemented. Tsering Dorje, a former middle school teacher in Tibet, said: **"Many Tibetans who are forced to learn in Chinese are struggling to keep up or are dropping out of education early."**

This is not only devastating for the individual students but it also perpetuates poverty among Tibetans. There is very clear evidence that poverty is linked to literacy. With literacy levels in Tibet already less than half of those of the People's Republic of China as a whole, the spread of these reforms would see many more Tibetans plunged into poverty.

Action

Become a Life Member and help the next generation of Tibetans grow up in a free Tibet! E-mail us at mail@freetibet.org or contact us on 020 7324 4605

Wikileaks: Nepal forces Tibetans to return

The release of 250,000 diplomatic cables detailing foreign relations and policies around the world has provided some of the most fascinating reading of recent times. At Free Tibet we have been appalled to learn from the cables that Tibetans are being forcibly returned to Tibet when attempting to flee via Nepal.

This news, exposed through a leaked cable from the US Embassy in New Delhi, revealed that the **"Chinese government rewards Nepali forces by providing financial incentives to officers who hand over Tibetans attempting to exit China."**

International law states that refugees must not be returned to their place of origin without checks being carried out first. Consequently China and Nepal are complicit in a gross violation of international law.

The number of Tibetan refugees successfully fleeing Tibet for India has markedly decreased since April 2008. China's financial incentives have undoubtedly played a part in this decline.

The cables also shed light on how important Tibet is to the Chinese administration. Chinese leaders worry that they could lose control of Tibet if they do not maintain tight restrictions

there; they also fear the domestic consequences and "unwanted interference" from India that the loss of Tibet might lead to.

President Hu Jintao took a particularly hard line when he served in Tibet as Party Secretary between 1989 and 1992. The wikileaks cables reveal that President Hu is still "completely" in charge of China's Tibet policy. Free Tibet hopes that government policy on Tibet will be open to change when President Hu steps down from office in 2012.

 www.freetibet.org/newsmedia

Liu Xiaobo wins Nobel Peace Prize

For the first time since the days of Nazi Germany in 1936, in 2010 the Nobel Peace Prize was not presented to its winner or a close relative.

The winner, Liu Xiaobo, is a Chinese university professor and human rights activist. He is in prison in China for drafting 'Charter 08', a pro-democracy petition signed by over 300 Chinese intellectuals and human rights activists.

China condemned the Nobel Committee's decision to award Liu the prize, calling him a 'criminal' and prevented his family from travelling to Norway to receive Liu's prize. Liu was represented at the award ceremony by an empty chair. China boycotted the ceremony and persuaded 17 other countries to do so; the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Naventham Pillay, also declined her invitation.

China warned Norway of 'consequences' if they held the awards ceremony, but Norway stood firm. Free Tibet urged the international community to follow the lead of Norway. Many countries heeded this call, including the US, whose President Barack Obama called for Mr Liu's release.

Liu has been a strong supporter of Tibetan rights. After the crackdown on Tibetan protesters in 2008, Liu initiated an open letter to the Chinese government which provided recommendations on how to improve the situation in Tibet. He has also written numerous articles advocating more freedoms for Tibetans.



Nobel prize winner Liu Xiaobo

Party elders challenge censorship

Just days after Liu Xiaobo won the Nobel Peace Prize, a group of senior ex-Communist Party officials wrote an open letter to the current party leaders challenging the party to improve freedom of speech and end government censorship.

The letter was prompted by a statement by Premier Wen Jiabao during an interview broadcast on CNN that "democracy and freedom are irresistible". The interview was not broadcast in China, but leaked on the

internet. It was undoubtedly aimed at Western audiences rather than a domestic Chinese one.

Among the signatories of the open letter were the former secretary to Chairman Mao and former directors of state media. The open letter demanded that China end the state control of media organisations, allow citizen-owned media organisations to exist, respect journalists and grant citizens the right to know about crimes and mistakes committed by the ruling party.

Join Free Tibet's Urgent Action Scheme

Help make a difference. Support Free Tibet's Urgent Action Scheme, a letter-writing scheme campaigning on behalf of political prisoners and lobbying governments on other urgent Tibet-related issues.

Experience shows that international awareness of individuals at risk can limit further mistreatment: your letters

about political prisoners Golog Jigme and Jigme Gyatso contributed to the protection of their welfare.

Signing up for Urgent Actions is easy on our website, or call the office on 020 7324 4605 or email mail@freetibet.org

 www.freetibet.org

● New rule bans overseas input into Tibetan monasteries.

China has issued new legislation making it illegal for any person or organisation from abroad to be involved in Tibetan monastic affairs. The regulation follows allegations made by Beijing that monks under the influence of overseas 'separatists' have been engaged in activities that could threaten Chinese rule. The heads of the different schools of Tibetan Buddhism are all in exile, mainly in Nepal or India, so the legislation further separates monasteries in Tibet from their lineage leaders (see page 4).

● Tibetan writer released on bail.

Well-known Tibetan writer Shogdung (aka Tagyal) was released on bail on 14 October 2010 pending trial on charges of 'splittism'. It is unusual for anyone to be released on bail in Tibet and China; on the one hand Shogdung is not in detention but on the other hand, charges have not been dismissed and so the authorities continue to have a hold on him. He was originally arrested in April 2010 following the publication of his now-banned book indicting Chinese policies in Tibet, *The Line between Heaven and Earth*.

● **Businessmen sentenced.** A court in Lhoka county sentenced two Tibetan businessman, Sonam Bhagdro and Tashi Topgyal, to 15 and 5 years respectively. They were arrested in August 2009 on suspicion of involvement in 'political activities'. These men were previously seen as exemplary citizens by the Chinese state.

● Monk sentenced to life imprisonment.

Jampel Wangchuk, 55, a senior monk at Drepung's Loseling College, has been sentenced to life in prison while Konchok Nyima, 43, the scripture teacher at Drepung's Gomang College, has been sentenced to 20 years. The charges against the two monks are unknown. Their imprisonment is of great concern to many Tibetans.



Help us fly hundreds of Tibetan flags
in central London this year!

To sponsor a flag for Tibet please complete the form on the cover letter and return to us in the Freepost envelope or call 020 7324 4605.