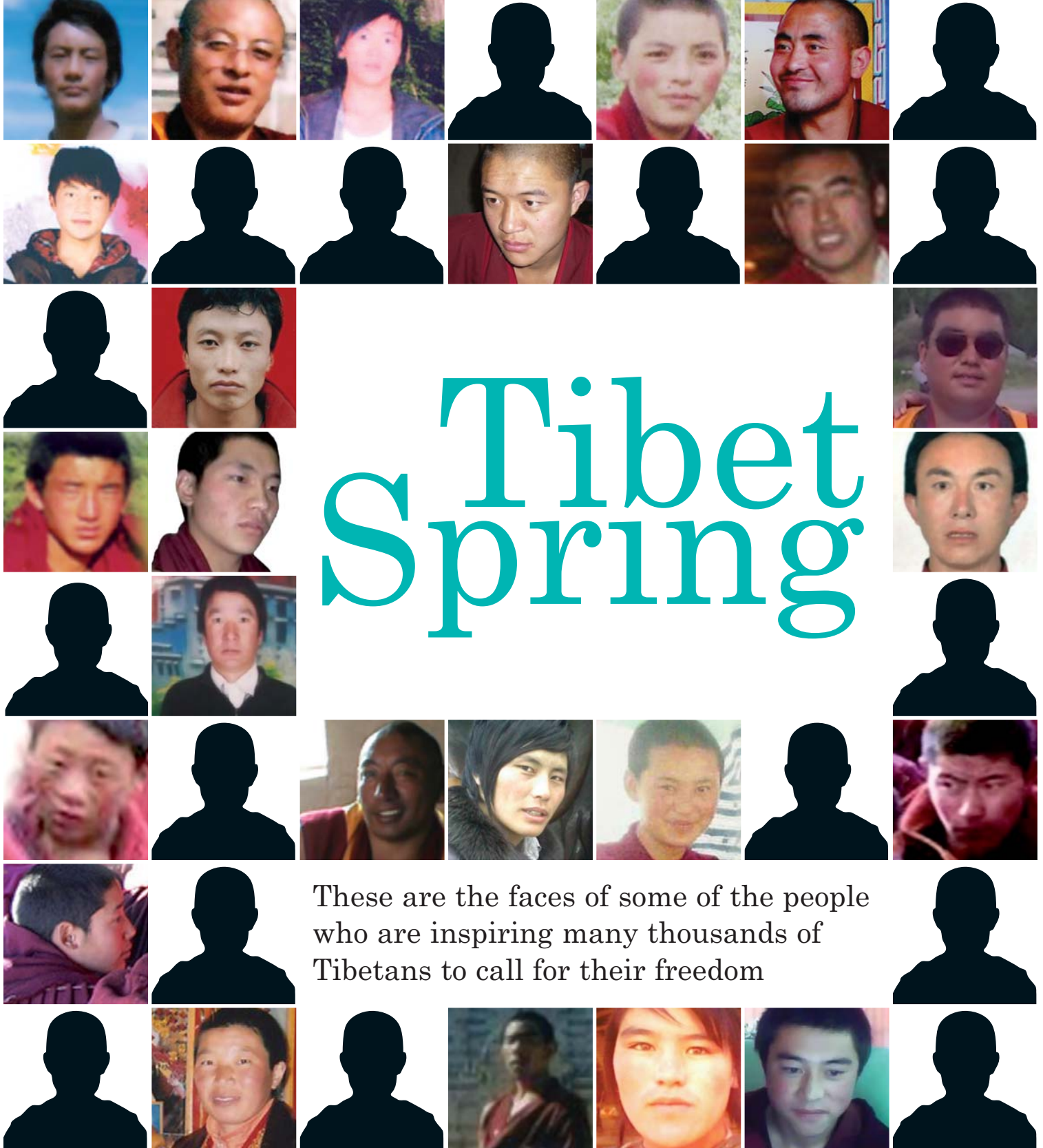


FREE TIBET

Issue 62 June 2012 issn 1360-4864

www.freetibet.org



Tibet Spring

These are the faces of some of the people who are inspiring many thousands of Tibetans to call for their freedom



Free Tibet Director Stephanie Brigden meets the Dalai Lama

Dear friends

As we mark Free Tibet's 25th year, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to you – your commitment and generosity over the years have allowed us to keep working for a Free Tibet. We are entirely funded by our members and donors and we always strive to make your money go as far as possible; that's why we are asking you to consider setting up your membership by Direct Debit – this saves administration costs so that more of your contribution can go into our work for Tibet.

The last few months in Tibet have been extraordinary: many people are now talking about the Tibet Spring, including Channel 4 News who worked with us to produce a report on the escalating crisis.

Unprecedented numbers of Tibetans from all walks of life are joining protests calling for freedom, including young girls like Tsering Kyi (see facing page), and levels of defiance continue to grow despite China's brutal response. We have received more footage and photographs from Tibet more quickly than ever before: you can see some of them and read more about the Tibet Spring in our picture feature on page 4.

We are all looking forward to the Dalai Lama's UK visit next week. Although tickets have now sold out for his London talk, Free Tibet is offering all our Life members a place at the talk in the Albert Hall, so why not treat yourself and take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to support Tibet into the future (see back cover). We have also developed some striking new designs featuring the Dalai Lama (page 9) – I do hope you like them!

Lastly, don't miss out on the chance to win one of our fantastic raffle prizes: £1 could see you lounging in a plunge pool in a Spanish nature reserve with a cocktail in your hand, or you might win a crate of Aspall's finest cuvee... good luck!

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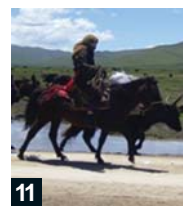
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Free Tibet stands for the right of Tibetans to determine their own future. It campaigns for an end to China's occupation of Tibet and for the fundamental human rights of Tibetans to be respected. Founded in 1987, Free Tibet generates active support 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: Harriet Beaumont
Design & Layout: Catherine Quine
Print: Crucial Colour



Front cover: Some of the people who inspired many thousands of Tibetans to call for their freedom.

“Life is meaningless if we don’t do something for Tibet”



On 3 March this year, 20-year-old student Tsering Kyi joined the growing number of Tibetans who have set themselves on fire in the name of freedom. This is her story.

Tsering Kyi was a loving daughter and sister, a bright student and a good friend. But perhaps foremost she was a proud Tibetan. Her last acts were to douse herself with petrol, walk into a vegetable market and die in flames for her country. Tsering undertook this act alone, though her action was for a whole nation.

Tsering was the second child in a family of nomadic herders from Gansu Province in eastern Tibet. As a child, her family’s life was defined by moving with the seasons. Growing up, she saw the nomadic way of life increasingly restricted by Chinese policies to forcibly resettle them. Pastures that were traditionally communal were divided into small household units and fenced off.

Cultural preservation

Tsering Kyi started her schooling late, aged ten, but made up for it by studying hard and becoming a model pupil. Her family say she was mature and independent, and dreamed of going to university.

She enjoyed returning home during school holidays to spend time with her family. If she was angry or concerned about the imposed limitations on traditional nomadic life, she never showed it.

Tsering did express concern about preserving the Tibetan language and actively encouraged others to use their mother tongue. She received an award in her home town in recognition of her contribution to language preservation.

“Tibetans are burning themselves”

In the weeks before her death, Tsering spent the winter holidays with her family. During one conversation, she talked about the number of Tibetans setting themselves on fire around the country. **“In Ngaba and other areas of Tibet, Tibetans are burning themselves. We should do something for Tibet – life is meaningless if we don’t do something for Tibet,”** she said.

Just days after returning to Nyima Town, where she attended school, Tsering Kyi put her words into action. She told no one what she was about to do.

After pouring petrol over herself, Tsering walked into the busy marketplace and set herself on fire. Eye witnesses report that she raised her fist above her head before falling to the ground. She died at the scene.

Tsering’s body was taken to the county police station and the police initially refused to give it to her family. It was eventually returned, on condition that it be cremated immediately and with only family members present.

While Tsering’s funeral may have been a private event, her mourning was not. A two-week long period of prayer took place at the local Tsendok monastery. Monks, family and the community prayed and chanted together. People from other monasteries and other counties came to show their respect and offer condolences.

Her family misses her deeply, but respects her action: Tsering Kyi gave her life in the hope of making a difference to her people. For that, she will live in the hearts of Tibetans forever.



S Tibet Spring

Protests

The unprecedented scale of protests in Tibet is increasingly indicative of a Tibet Spring, analysis echoed by the media. Although media attention has understandably focused on those who have set themselves on fire (nun Palden Choetso, top), protests against the Chinese occupation take many forms.

In more traditional non-violent protests, Tibetans are taking to the streets holding pictures of the Dalai Lama (upper middle, Rongwo, March). The banned Tibetan flag is also often raised as a gesture of defiance against the occupying forces.

Monks and sometimes lay people across Tibet also often display banners calling for freedom. This protest (lower centre) took place near Tridu Monastery in February. Writing on the banners reads: 'Stand in solidarity, freedom in Tibet', 'The return of His Holiness to Tibet' and 'Release the Panchen Lama'.

Hundreds of students have demonstrated for Tibetan language rights. These young people are taking a courageous stand for their Tibetan culture.

Up to 700 students took part in such a protest in Rebkong in March, ripping up their new Chinese books and marching into town. Just days later, students from the same school took part in a solidarity march (bottom right), following self-immolations in Rongwo Town (see next page).

In addition to public demonstrations, many Tibetans participate in less overtly political protests to express their rejection of the occupation Tibet. On Lhakar – White or Pure Wednesdays – Tibetans assert their identity by wearing traditional clothes, avoiding using Chinese words and shopping only in Tibetan-owned businesses.



Faces in the photographs below have been obscured to protect the identity of protesters.



Spreading the word

Tibetans are sharing more photos and footage of protests than ever before, despite restrictions on most channels of communications and the risk of detention and torture for anyone caught sharing images.

The self-immolations of Jamyang Palden (14 March) and Sonam Dargye (17 March) in Rongwo Town, Rebkong, led to the biggest protests in Tibet in decades (below). Thousands of people gathered. One eye-witness described it as **“the biggest gathering of people I have ever seen in this place”**.

What also made these protests noteworthy was the speed with which photos and videos emerged from Tibet. The sheer volume of materials shared with Free Tibet underlines the increasing determination of Tibetans to stand up for their freedom. This also meant that Free Tibet was able to secure coverage of the

protest in leading international media outlets including Channel 4 News, BBC, CNN and New York Times.

One Tibetan in Ngaba remarked, **“I really don’t have the courage to sacrifice my life with immolation but I can spend time in Chinese jail for passing information out”**. The remarkable bravery of Tibetans who share such materials means that we are able to disseminate footage of protests to the world while they are still ongoing, enabling Free Tibet and the international media to hold China to account for its actions.





Consequences of protesting

The consequences of participating in protests are grave. Chinese forces have opened fire on peaceful protesters on a number of occasions this year, killing at least five and injuring scores more.

The most serious shooting incident since 2008 took place in Drango on 23 January when Chinese state security forces opened fire on a group of protesters, killing two, including Yonten (top left), and injuring dozens more.

A protest in Serthar Town on 24 January was also fired upon – at least two Tibetans were shot dead. The following week, Free Tibet received a number of photos from Serthar (top right)

which showed the brutal way Chinese forces deal with Tibetans.

Bhuda (right) was one of approximately a hundred people detained following a protest in Meruma township, near Ngaba, in January. The well-being and whereabouts of these hundred people are currently unknown. Hundreds of Tibetans have been disappeared or detained since the protests began and we have received reports of torture and beatings.

International silence

Despite the escalation of protests and the widespread dissemination of images from Tibet, international government reactions remain muted. UK Foreign Office Minister Jeremy Brown released a statement in February, following intensive lobbying by Free Tibet, saying he was “deeply concerned” at instances of Chinese forces shooting peaceful protesters. However, the Prime Minister has remained silent on the issue.

The United States Senate passed a resolution in March calling on China to end repressive policies, address the grievances of the Tibetan people and allow unrestricted access to Tibet for

international journalists and diplomats.

To date however, international leaders, including Prime Minister Cameron and President Obama, have maintained an almost universal silence.

Action: Break the silence

- Watch and share our cheeky campaign videos highlighting world leaders' silence and calling on them to speak out.



www.freetibet.org/campaigns

- Sign and send the enclosed action postcard to David Cameron calling on him to break his silence on Tibet

Get involved

Free Tibet turns 25 – Thank you to all our members

Free Tibet is marking our 25th anniversary this year. We'd like to take this occasion to express a special thank you to all our members and donors who have made our work possible over the years. As a membership organisation, we could not have done any of it without you.

Paul from Ramsgate, a long-term supporter and energetic fundraiser (he ran the London marathon for Tibet in 2011!) talked to us about what inspires his support for Tibet and what his membership means to him.

"I have been interested in Buddhism since my father died when I was 14. I think it made me stronger. I stumbled onto books like 'Seven Years in Tibet' which encouraged me to find out more. I was appalled and disheartened at how people are too concerned with their own tiny problems to even consider that a culture, a language, a religion and a people are being eroded.

"I like to think that my small efforts help. I feel that even if I make two people look at the Free Tibet website and question what is happening, they will snowball awareness the crisis to others. My colleagues must be tired of me chiming in with 'Don't forget Tibet!' during any conversation linked to oppression or human rights. I also tend to 'accidentally' drop the odd leaflet in the staffroom.

"When you feel like nobody is listening, go to a protest with other members, it's the best way to reignite that passion.

"All my colleagues and family members supported me to collect sponsorship money and to train for the 2011

London Marathon – I hope to be back again in 2013 for more sponsorship!

"Being a member helps me to stay up-to-date with what's happening in Tibet: if it wasn't for Free Tibet, very little information would reach the outside world. I decided to set up a Direct Debit for monthly donations as this was easier for me and it means that Free Tibet can concentrate on spreading news and helping. It also means that even if I don't manage to organise any fundraising, my contribution still goes to help free Tibet each month."



Action

Please consider joining Paul by setting up a Direct Debit today. Direct Debits require less administration so that your contribution works harder for our campaigns; membership payments via Direct Debit also allow us to plan ahead more effectively. And it will save you the hassle of having to renew your membership!

To set up your Direct Debit membership today: just complete the form on the cover letter or online.



www.freetibet.org/join

Tibet mass lobby and protest in March



On 7 March, Tibetans and Tibet supporters gathered in Parliament calling on their MPs and the government to take action on Tibet. Members of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet met with supporters to discuss the current situation and what the British government could do to help.

On Saturday 10 March, we were joined by hundreds of supporters as we marched through central London in solidarity with Tibetans in Tibet. Free Tibet and other Tibet support groups presented a letter to 10 Downing Street and the Chinese Embassy. A Tibet march also took place in Edinburgh.

Many thanks to all those who joined us. If you couldn't attend the 10 March events this year, you can see photos on our facebook page.



www.facebook.com/freetibet.org

Free Tibet would like to thank our new Life Members: Jonathon Bond Annie Murray Kay Parkinson E Row

Free Tibet Raffle 2012

Free Tibet is delighted to launch our raffle for 2012. For as little as £1, besides supporting Free Tibet you can have the chance to win a luxury holiday in Scotland, tickets to the ballet or an original Tibetan thangka.

We would like to thank all those who donated these amazing prizes.

For tickets please contact us on raffle@freetibet.org or call 020 7324 4605.

1st Prize: Three luxurious nights for two people at **The Four Seasons Hotel** in Perthshire, Scotland, including meals at the award-winning restaurant. 'A picture postcard perfect hideaway to recharge your batteries'. www.thefourseasonshotel.co.uk



2nd Prize: A two-night stay for two people in a luxury tipi or yurt at **Eco-Retreats**, set in a beautiful remote and secluded location on the edge of Snowdonia. <http://www.ecoretreats.co.uk/>



3rd Prize: Three nights for two people at the **Hoopoe Yurt Hotel** in Andalucia, Spain. Lounge beside the natural saltwater pool, walk in the hills, sip cocktails in the plunge pool or simply doze in a hammock. www.yurthotel.com

Closing date: 10 December 2012

Draw date: 13 December 2012

4th Prize: An original Tibetan thangka donated by **Pink Lotus**. www.pinklotus.co.uk

5th Prize: A crate of **Cuvée from Aspall**, perfect for a celebration! www.aspall.co.uk

6th Prize: A pair of tickets to a marvellous performance by the **English National Ballet** at the London Coliseum. www.ballet.org.uk/



7th Prize: An exotic Moroccan Rasul for two at the **Portland Hall Spa** in Southport. www.portlandhallspa.com

8th Prize: Two tickets to a production at the multi-award-winning **Finborough Theatre**, London. www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Runners up: A pair of tickets to any performance at the **Bush Hall**, London. www.bushhallmusic.co.uk/

Raffle only open to residents of the UK excluding Northern Ireland. If you think you may have a gambling problem please seek advice and support at www.gambleaware.co.uk.

'We Can Do It' – Free Tibet's new merchandise range

Free Tibet is delighted to announce a new range of merchandise to mark our 25th anniversary. Our t-shirts, bags, mugs, badges, posters and postcards all feature our striking new design 'Tibet Needs You'. There is also a brand new 'We Can Do It' design featuring a Tibetan woman in the style of the iconic WWII-era 'Rosie the Riveter' image.

To order these and many other items, please return the enclosed form, call 020 7324 4605 or visit the online shop.

 www.freetibet.org/shop



Simon Hopkinson Sandra Erickson

Tibetan flag-raising ruffles Chinese feathers

The annual Tibetan flag-raising event in Northampton on 6 March sparked a hostile response from the Chinese Embassy in London.

Local Tibet hero Caroline Scattergood organised the 13th annual flag-raising ceremony, replacing a Union Jack at the town

hall with the Tibetan flag.

Chinese officials have written to the local council questioning the attendance of mayor Jamie Lamie at the event.

Caroline said: "I do it because they [the Tibetan people] can't do it, it's that simple. They will be imprisoned or arrested."

A spokesman for Northampton Borough Council said: "The council did receive a letter from the Chinese Embassy, politely inquiring about the mayor's attendance at the raising of the Tibet flag outside the town hall." The council responded that the mayor's attendance to the event was traditional, and no further questions were raised.

China's reaction highlights how events like this, no matter how distant from Tibet, do ruffle Chinese feathers and are effective in raising awareness.



Caroline Scattergood raises the Tibetan flag in Northampton, 6 March 2012

Buy your own flag from our shop and show your support for Tibet!



www.freetibet.org/shop

China tells Tibetans: "Have fun... or else"

The Chinese authorities have stepped up their interference in the religious and cultural life of the Tibetan people. 22 February marked the beginning of Losar, the Tibetan New Year. This is normally a very happy time, with celebrations in the family, visiting friends, exchanging gifts and going to monasteries to make offerings.

However, this year many Tibetans decided not to celebrate Losar in remembrance of all those who have self-immolated or been killed in protests in the past year. The Chinese Communist Party responded by forcing people to appear to celebrate by attending dances and setting off fireworks.

Government officials called the people who did not celebrate "splittists" and threatened to cut off their welfare payments. They also offered bribes to people to make them celebrate.

Some Tibetans who had been detained after attending the Kalachakra ceremony in India were allowed out for the week to participate in the enforced festivities. However, they then had to return to detention to continue their patriotic re-education.

In the first five days of Losar, Tibetans in the Kardze region of eastern Tibet posted pamphlets calling for Tibetan independence and the return of the Dalai Lama. Also in the region, Chinese officials set off fireworks on the first day of Losar, but had to stop further celebrations after a protest by Tibetans.



Tibetans traditionally celebrate losar by lighting candles and make offerings

China shamed at the United Nations

China was forced to sit at the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council with all the other national representatives while a report damning China's policies in Tibet was presented in March. China is extremely sensitive to public criticism, so this occasion will have had them scowling in their seats.

The UN report, by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, called on China to suspend the forced resettlement of Tibetan nomadic herders. This and further recommendations on Chinese policies in Tibet were largely based on Free Tibet's submission to the UN.

Official Chinese statistics acknowledge one million Tibetan nomads had been forced from their land by 2009. In reality, the numbers are likely to be far higher. Nomads are being resettled into concrete housing, often in remote locations without adequate schools or health clinics. Tibetan nomads are often not appropriately consulted prior to resettlement, and are left without livestock - their main means to make a living.

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



The UN criticised China's forced settlement of Tibetan nomads

confirms that Tibetan nomadic practices maintain biodiversity on the plateau and keep the grasslands healthy. The ecology of the plateau is vital to one billion people across Asia who rely on water flowing from the Tibetan plateau – also called 'the third pole' because it holds the world's third largest store of water after the North and South poles.

The forced resettlement of Tibetan nomads is one of the greatest

expulsions of a people from their land in history, comparable to the expulsions of Australian Aboriginals and North American Indians by nineteenth-century European colonialists.

Depriving such a huge proportion of the Tibetan population of their homes and livelihoods without doubt fuels protests in Tibet.

 www.freetibet.org/news

Come tweet with us

Free Tibet has for many years provided you with news from Tibet through our magazine.

Nowadays, we can keep you informed online about what is happening in Tibet. This allows us to deliver news to you as we receive it, making sure that Tibet supporters know what is happening in Tibet, often even before events have been covered by the media.

Whether it's the latest news direct from Tibet, analysis and debate or live feeds from protests and events, we strive to be the most reliable source of information about Tibet online.

That's why we'd love you to visit us on facebook, twitter and tumblr (our blog, don't you know) for up-to-the-minute news updates, photos and videos. Plus, it's a great way for you to support our campaigns and connect with us, your MP and other Free Tibet supporters.

Action

Become a digital activist and keep up to date with our news: follow us on facebook, twitter and tumblr, visit our website.



[@freetibetorg](https://twitter.com/freetibetorg)



Facebook.com/freetibetorg



tumblr.com/blog/freetibetorg



www.freetibet.org

Free Tibet Life Membership

CLIVE ARROWSMITH

Tibet is for Life

**Help the next generation of Tibetans
grow up in a free Tibet!**

This June, Free Tibet will host an exclusive event for Life Members to mark Free Tibet's 25th anniversary. We are inviting all our Life Members to hear the Dalai Lama's public talk at the Royal Albert Hall on 19 June. The talk will be followed by a private reception for Life Members. If you would like to join Free Tibet and other Life Members at this event, sign up for Life Membership today!

To become a Life Member, please complete the form on the cover letter of the magazine, call 020 7324 4608.

