

FREE TIBET

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Thousands protest environmental destruction



freeTIBET

• Shootings • Environmental destruction • Protest • Messages of hope •

“ I noted worrying trends in key areas of human rights concern, including the heightened monitoring and restrictions placed on freedom of expression on- and off-line, as well as the persecution, arrest, and detention of people for peacefully expressing their views or legally exercising their professional duties.”

EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Mr Stavros Lambrinidis, on visiting Tibet in September 2013



Free Tibet Director
Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren

Dear friends

As this magazine reaches you, Free Tibet and many other Tibet support groups are gearing up for China's appearance at the UN in Geneva for the Universal Periodic Review of their progress and performance on human rights (page 11). Your involvement, via the Xi Jinping petition (page 5) and messages on the prayer flags we took to the Chinese embassy (page 10), helps us keep the pressure on China at this important time.

Our articles about the Tawu shooting (page 3) and the mining protest in Yushu (pages 4-5) highlight the new and creative ways that Tibetans are finding to apply pressure and hold Chinese officials to account. - Meanwhile, on pages 6 and 7, you can catch up on the latest news from our corporate accountability campaign against Intercontinental.

In addition to campaigning, we're also starting to think about preparing for Christmas. Here at Free Tibet, Christmas means new stock for our online shop (page 8), the Big Give Christmas challenge for our research partner Tibet Watch (page 9) and, of course, the Free Tibet raffle (page 8). With some great prizes in our raffle and exciting new gifts in our shop, there's bound to be something for everyone.

With very best wishes,

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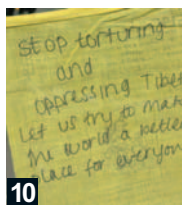
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Free Tibet stands for the right of Tibetans to determine their own future. It campaigns for an end to China's occupation of Tibet and for the fundamental human rights of Tibetans to be respected. Founded in 1987, Free Tibet generates active support 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.

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Front cover: Getty Images



Security forces open fire at Dalai Lama celebration

China responds to peaceful gathering with bullets, tear gas, arrests and torture.

A monk was shot in the head and at least six others received gunshot wounds in Tawu county, eastern Tibet when a peaceful celebration was subjected to the brutality of the occupying Chinese forces.

On 6 July several hundred Tibetans gathered at the sacred Machen Pomra mountain to offer prayers to mark the Dalai Lama's birthday.

Security forces prevented many from reaching the top but others simply went to another part of the mountain to pray. At around 3pm the crowd started to go home.

However, security personnel prevented people leaving the site and inflicted damage on a car carrying Tibetans who were trying to depart. Tensions rose as the crowd asserted that its gathering was legal.

Chinese violence

An argument ensued and security forces began beating Tibetans. Some people threw stones in retaliation and at some point the security forces opened fire. Tear gas was also fired into the crowd.

Tashi Sonam, a monk from Nyatso monastery, was shot in the head and taken to hospital in Chengdu. His latest condition is unknown.

Eleven serious injuries were reported at the hospital but it is believed that others did not seek treatment for fear of being arrested. Family visits were forbidden.

Arrests and torture

At least 20 people were arrested following the incident, including people who had been

shot. 72-year-old Yama Tsering, who sustained four broken ribs during the day, was tortured with an electric prod in detention. There are unconfirmed reports others were tortured in this way too.

One nun who was severely beaten during detention was hospitalised while another who tried to visit a hospitalised friend was beaten and had her arm broken.

In defiance of this aggression around 3,000 Tibetans gathered at Tawu Monastery demanding the release of those arrested. They threatened to remove their children from school and stop cultivating farmland. Local truck drivers threatened to strike.

The authorities eventually released those who had been arrested.

Official denial

Images of security personnel at the event and injured Tibetans were widely distributed by Free Tibet. Incredibly Chinese officials still denied any knowledge of the incident.

In fact, just days later, Chinese State Councillor Yang Jiechi told US State Department officials in Washington that people in Tibet are "enjoying happier lives and they're enjoying unprecedented freedoms and human rights".

Obviously those "unprecedented freedoms" do not stretch to peacefully celebrating a birthday without the fear of being shot, arrested or tortured.

Free Tibet has brought this incident to the attention of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.



Top:
Clashes at Machen Pomra
Above:
Yama Tsering (top) and Dolma Butri

Tibetans resist environmental destruction

Photos obtained by us at the time showed both the size of the protest and the scale of the Chinese military presence.

Tibetan protestors called the Chinese President to account using his own words at an environmental protest in central Tibet.

The demonstrators displayed posters of a Xi Jinping speech in which he spoke of the importance of protecting the environment. The ingenious move formed part of a sustained protest against mining in Yushu, in the Amdo region.

More than 3,000 Tibetans gathered on 13 August to protest against the mine, which unconfirmed reports suggest was prompted by the discovery of diamonds in the area.

After three days of peaceful protest, the Paramilitary Armed Police violently broke up the demonstration by firing tear gas into the crowd and beating protestors with electric prods.

An unknown number of people were arrested. Local community leader Kaisa Solder has been missing since the incident.

The posters quoting President Xi Jinping's speech were erected during the protest. The speech is completely at odds with China's constant wreckage of the Tibetan landscape and pillaging of its resources through extensive mining, damming of rivers and large infrastructure projects.

Mining in Tibet

Mining is almost always undertaken by Chinese or multinational companies; Tibetans have no power to determine what is done with their own land.

The Tibetan environment suffers the effects, while the economic benefits flow to non-Tibetan companies and workers.

A landslide in April killed more than 80 miners in the Tibet Autonomous Region. Just two of those killed were Tibetan – the rest were all ethnic Han Chinese, highlighting both the risks that China is taking with the Tibetan environment and the fact that Tibetans are deprived of work even as manual labourers.

The Central Tibetan Administration attributed the landslide to "aggressive expansion" of the open-cast mine by a state-owned mining company "in order to acquire maximum profit in the shortest period of time".

A recent Chinese government study revealed that the cost of environmental degradation across China in 2010 was about \$230 billion (£150bn) or 3.5 per cent of the nation's gross domestic product.





Environmental protests in Tibet

The destruction of the natural environment is frequently the cause of protest in Tibet.

In May thousands of people resisted a Chinese company's attempt to begin mining on a sacred mountain in central Tibet. A delegation from the protesters approached those working on the site with a plea to "leave our resources where they are". County authorities later announced that mining would not take place.

In 2010, at least one man was reportedly killed when security forces opened fire on another mining protest in Palyul County, eastern Tibet.

On that occasion, a petition against the activities of a local mining company was rejected by local government and it was reported that the petitioners were beaten. Dozens of fellow Tibetans joined them and camped outside the building for days before a stand-off between the police and the protesters ended when the police opened fire.

Forced displacement of nomads

Freeing up land to exploit Tibet's mineral wealth is believed to be the reason for China's policy of forcing millions of nomads off the arable lands they have farmed for centuries and into purpose-built concrete settlements.

Extraction of valuable Tibetan minerals such as copper, zinc and lead reduces China's dependence on costly imports, commodity prices for which have soared on the back of Chinese industrial demand.

Xi Jinping's words suggested a new Chinese outlook on the environment. But the actions of people acting on his behalf suggest that he intends to continue treating it with the same disdain he regards the Tibetan people.

Tibetans have no power to determine what is done with their own land.

Left: The banner; Security forces in Yushu
Top: Protesters gather at the mining site
Below: More PLA troops arriving

Action

We have created a petition to Chinese President Xi Jinping. We ask that he:

- Account for all Tibetans who have been detained and sentenced in relation to protests, including self-immolation.
- Allow human rights monitors, UN representatives, journalists and diplomats access to Tibet to investigate excessive use of force against protesters.
- Ensure that the families of all detainees are informed of their whereabouts and that those in custody have immediate access to legal representation.
- Amend the law regarding peaceful assembly and freedom of expression to put it in line with international human rights standards.

Nearly 5,000 people have signed so far. You can add your name at

 www.freetibet.org/petition/xijinping





Intercontinental: In bed with China

Our campaign gathers pace with Westminster protest, celebrity backing and strong media interest.

Free Tibet's campaign against InterContinental's decision to open a luxury resort in suppressed Lhasa stepped up a notch with a daring protest at the global chain's Westminster hotel.

On 5 August activists posing as InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) chief executive Richard Solomons and Chinese President Xi Jinping climbed into a double bed which was placed at the entrance to the InterContinental Westminster under the noses of hotel security.

Selling out Tibet

A bed sheet banner was emblazoned with the message: Selling out Tibet. By getting into bed with the Chinese regime, Intercontinental is putting profit before human rights and the freedom of the Tibetan people. A number of other activists dressed as Chinese

soldiers – a sight which visitors to the Intercontinental Lhasa will have to get used to.

The entire spectacle caught the eye of numerous hotel guests and the general public with many taking pictures; some even posed for photos with our strange bedfellows. The Reuters news agency posted a number of pictures from our demonstration online, maximising the embarrassment for the British company.

Boycott success

Running a hotel in Lhasa will gift priceless PR to the Chinese dictatorship which is responsible for the brutal repression of the Tibetan people.

Because of this, around 3,000 people have now joined our boycott and contacted Mr Solomons to tell him that the boycott will continue as long as Intercontinental cosies up to a brutal dictatorship.

Above:
Richard Solomons and Xi Jinping
shake hands on a deal
Right:
Free Tibet's message is clear

And that message is going international. A French online news blog included our campaign in a 'Calls to boycott highlights' piece; placing it alongside famous boycotts such as those against Nestle and foie gras production.

Inaction and ignorance

However, Intercontinental shows no sign of changing its plans.

Free Tibet met senior IHG executives on 18 July. In an hour-long meeting, George Turner, IHG's executive vice-president and general counsel, offered the vaguest of reassurances about the company's intentions and chose not to answer or rebut any of the specific charges and questions put to him.

Free Tibet director, Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren and campaigns officer Alistair Currie presented Mr Turner and other IHG executives with photos of human rights abuses in Tibet, a powerful account of the current crisis and a detailed and comprehensive case against the hotel.

Celebrity backing

Our campaign has been boosted with celebrity backing.

Long-time supporter Juliet Stevenson, star of *Truly, Madly, Deeply* and *Bend It Like Beckham*, has offered her support. Juliet said: "I was deeply shocked to hear how abuses in Tibet will be exacerbated by the Intercontinental hotel in Lhasa. I am happy to support Free Tibet's boycott of Intercontinental."



When asked whether the 'Intercontinental Lhasa Paradise' would fly the Tibetan flag, Mr Turner appeared not to know that the flag is banned in Tibet.

Challenged on the hotel's offensive and deceptive name and whether IHG had fulfilled their self-assigned responsibility to make social and human rights impact assessments before signing the deal to run the complex, Mr Turner and other senior executives responded with their go-to line about training opportunities for employees. A follow-up letter to Free Tibet continued this farcical stance while dodging other questions for 'commercial' reasons.

Running a hotel in Lhasa will gift priceless PR to the Chinese dictatorship, which is responsible for the brutal repression of the Tibetan people.

Join the boycott

Tell Intercontinental's chief executive Richard Solomons that you will boycott his hotels until his company withdraws from its plans in Tibet.

Write a letter:
Richard Solomons
Intercontinental Hotels Group PLC
Broadwater Park
Denham
Buckinghamshire
UB9 5HR
UK

Or sign up online at

 www.freetibet.org/ihg



AMELIA SEDDON

The Free Tibet raffle is now online!

For as little as £1, you could be the lucky winner of one of eight fantastic prizes. Try your luck today and you could find yourself dining by the shores of Loch Earn, whisked off to a secluded mountain retreat in Andalucia, or the proud owner of an original Tibetan thangka.

Closing date: **17 December 2013**

Draw date: **20 December 2013**

Late returns will be treated as a donation.



www.freetibet.org/raffle

Remember: the raffle is only open to residents of the UK, excluding Northern Ireland. You must be 16 years of age or over to buy tickets. Please gamble responsibly. If you think you may have a gambling problem please seek advice and support which can be found at: www.gambleaware.co.uk

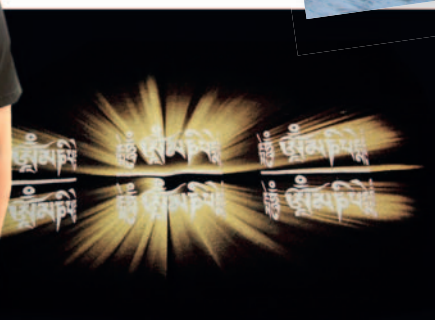


Christmas gifts from Free Tibet

Once again, Free Tibet is here to take the stress out of your Christmas shopping. Our popular blankets are now available in a new range of colours – perfect for cosying up under during the festive period. The latest additions to our catalogue include earrings, pendants, mala beads, Himalayan angels for your Christmas tree, a new t-shirt design and a new mug. We also have all the traditional favourites in stock. And don't forget your Free Tibet Christmas cards. We have two designs on offer this year, right, and we can't wait to see which one turns out to be your favourite.



www.freetibet.org/shop



Have your donation doubled this Christmas... for free!



As you may be aware, Tibet Watch is a registered charity monitoring human rights in Tibet. Without Tibet Watch, Free Tibet simply wouldn't be able to turn the international media spotlight on Tibet. Nor would we have any evidence to present to the UN of the human rights abuses China tries so hard to hide.

From their office in Dharamsala, in the foothills of the Indian Himalayas, Tibet Watch researchers speak to a range of contacts, collating and corroborating testimonies and eye-witness accounts of human rights abuses in Tibet, including torture and cases of arbitrary detention.

Tibet Watch makes a huge difference: documenting cases where advocacy has prevented torture, reduced sentences and forced the state to take a more proportionate response to large scale incidents.

Tibet is essentially closed to foreign media and Tibetans risk life imprisonment for speaking out about their lack of freedom, so Tibet Watch protects the identities of its sources by ensuring their communication systems aren't vulnerable to intrusion.

Help Tibet Watch in early December

Tibet Watch needs your help to keep its India office running. It costs:

- £19 to buy a new heater for the Tibet Watch office (before the snow comes!)
- £39 a month to maintain secure communications with our contacts inside Tibet
- £208 to employ a local researcher for one month

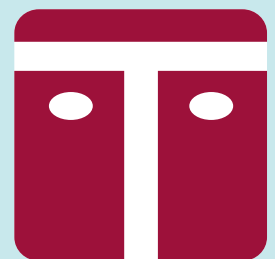
Tibet Watch has teamed up with the Big Give to potentially double any donation you make online on 5, 6 or 7 December.

Every pound you donate will be matched by philanthropists, but only while funds last – so donate as close to 10am as possible!



Need reminding nearer the time?

To be sent a reminder of how and when to donate online simply email our fundraising officer at jo@freetibet.org

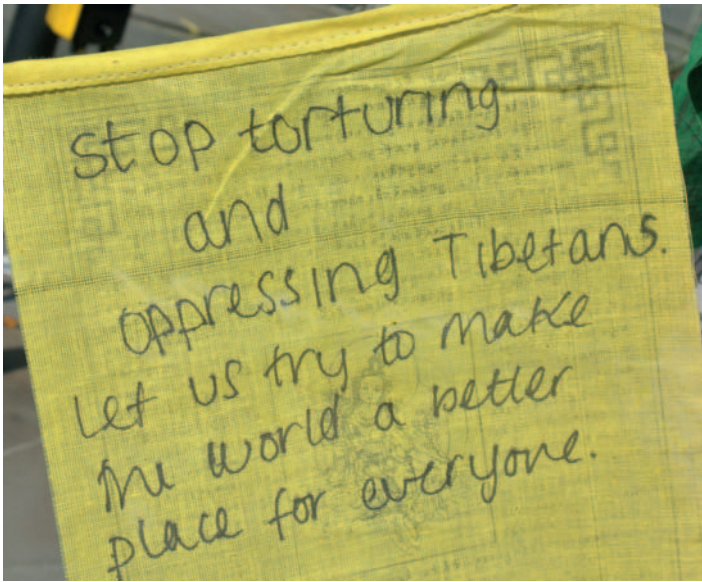


TIBET WATCH

བོད་གནས་ལྷ་ཞིབ་



www.freetibet.org/biggive



Messages of hope

Earlier this year we asked you to sponsor a prayer flag with your own message to the Chinese leadership and hundreds of you did. Generous volunteers wrote your prayers, pleas and exhortations on hundreds of Tibetan prayer flags. Then in September we tried to deliver these messages of peace to the Chinese embassy in London in person. Not surprisingly, we were unsuccessful so we displayed them outside instead (pictured). We have now posted them and we trust they have been delivered! Thank you for your messages. Hopefully next time the Chinese embassy will open the door.



Tibet is for life

Free Tibet Life Membership – help the next generation of Tibetans grow up in a free Tibet.

Sign up today to become part of a growing group of Life Members for £500 and advocate the rights of future generations.

In addition to the usual membership benefits, Life Members receive:

- Copies of all Free Tibet's latest publications
- Invitations to all Free Tibet's special events
- An invitation to meet the staff and the Director to discuss our work

- A new Free Tibet t-shirt every year
- Acknowledgement of your support in the Free Tibet magazine and website

To become a Life Member, please complete the form on the magazine cover letter or call 020 7324 4605

 www.freetibet.org/support/life

Diplomacy update

China has slightly loosened its iron-fisted grip on diplomatic access to Tibet, allowing the American and Australian ambassadors to visit Lhasa this summer.

America's Gary Locke (pictured right, standing centre) and his Australian counterpart Frances Adamson made stage-managed trips to Tibet in June and August respectively.

It was reported that the city's usual heavy security disappeared prior to Mr Locke's arrival and police officers dressed as nomad Tibetans, complete with prayer wheels and mala beads.

Both envoys insisted that they discussed the importance of open access to Tibet.

US State Department spokesman Patrick Ventrell said Mr Locke met with Lhasa residents to learn about "local conditions" and he "emphasised the importance of preserving the Tibetan people's cultural heritage, including its unique linguistic, religious and cultural traditions."

UN dialogue

Meanwhile Free Tibet has been engaging in our own dialogue with the Chinese state via the United Nations.

China has responded to the joint report submitted by Free Tibet and Tibet Watch to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

However, many questions were left unanswered and several others were answered with blatant fallacies, for example that "the right to freedom of religion is respected and protected by law".

The Chinese government claimed many self-immolations by minors were motivated by personal problems not political protest, while blaming the Dalai Lama and his "clique" – arguments which seem to contradict each other.

The UNCRC will make recommendations for China to implement at a hearing in late September and China will detail its progress at the next meeting in 2018.

Human rights review

Free Tibet has also been working hard ahead of the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

China will address the UPR's October meeting for an hour, before other nations put questions and comments to China, who will choose which recommendations to accept.

The other countries have two hours split between them, so it is likely to be restricted to 40-50 seconds per nation.

Amid so many human rights issues in China, Free Tibet is lobbying hard to ensure that the issues relevant to Tibet will be included. We met with the Foreign Office regarding the UK's response and will lobby other governments as well.



ALISON ANZALONE

● Crackdown on self-immolation protests.

Seventeen-year-old middle school student Dorjee was sentenced to two and a half years for allegedly aiding protesters who set themselves on fire, shouting independence slogans and establishing an organisation called 'Inheriting Tibetan Tradition'. Dowa Township native, 63-year-old Aku Gyatak, will spend four years in prison for collecting donations before a self-immolators' prayer rituals. Another nine residents of Dowa Township have been arrested in connection to protests. Around 120 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2011.

● More singers imprisoned for political songs.

In June, news emerged that Pema Tinley, 22, and Chakdor, 32, from Ngaba, had been each sentenced in February to two years in prison following their album 'The Pain of an Unhealed Wound'. Their songs praise the Dalai Lama and Tibetan protesters. In July another popular singer and father-of-three, Kalsang Yarphel, was arrested. His songs do not even go as far as calling for Tibetan freedom, but merely celebrate Tibetan identity and promote the Tibetan language.

● Tibetan man beaten to death in jail.

A father-of-two has become the second confirmed death in custody in Tibet this year. Guldrak was arrested on 8 August in Maywa, eastern Tibet. Within a fortnight he was dead in the detention centre where he was held, after being beaten during his interrogation. After initially trying to pass it off as suicide, local police accepted responsibility for the death following local protests 500. Financial compensation has been offered, but there is no indication that a criminal investigation will take place.



FLICKR/COMETSTARMOON



www.freetibet.org/news-media



What could you win with your pound?

Closing date:
17 December 2013

Draw date:
20 December 2013

1st prize: Three luxurious nights for two people at **The Four Seasons Hotel**, on the banks of Loch Earn, Scotland, including meals at the award-winning restaurant – an ideal place to recharge your batteries.

2nd prize: Two nights for two people in a luxury tipi or yurt at **Eco Retreats**. Escape from the hustle and bustle of modern life and enjoy the beauty of nature in the heart of the Welsh mountains.

3rd prize: Three nights for two people at **Cloud House Farm**, a secluded mountain yurt hideaway, located deep in the hills of Andalucia, Spain. Explore spectacular hiking routes, secluded river pools or simply lounge in a hammock and take in the breathtaking surroundings.

4th prize: An original brocaded Tibetan thangka, donated by **Pink Lotus**.

5th prize: Two nights for up to three people at **Hill House Retreats**, nestled above the picturesque and unspoilt coastal village of Llansteffan, Wales. Enjoy a quiet and revitalising retreat, with stunning coastal scenery and views.

6th prize: A pair of tickets to a performance of 'Le Corsaire' by the **English National Ballet**, at the London Coliseum.

7th prize: An original artwork depicting Tara, a Buddhist deity embodying compassion, by artist **Becca Marsh**.

8th prize: Two tickets to a production at the multi-award winning **Finborough Theatre**, London.

We would like to thank all our prize donors, whose generosity has made this year's raffle possible.

Late returns will be treated as a donation.

Remember: the raffle is only open to residents of the UK, excluding Northern Ireland. You must be 16 years of age or over to buy tickets.

Please gamble responsibly. If you think you may have a gambling problem please seek advice and support which can be found at: www.gambleaware.co.uk