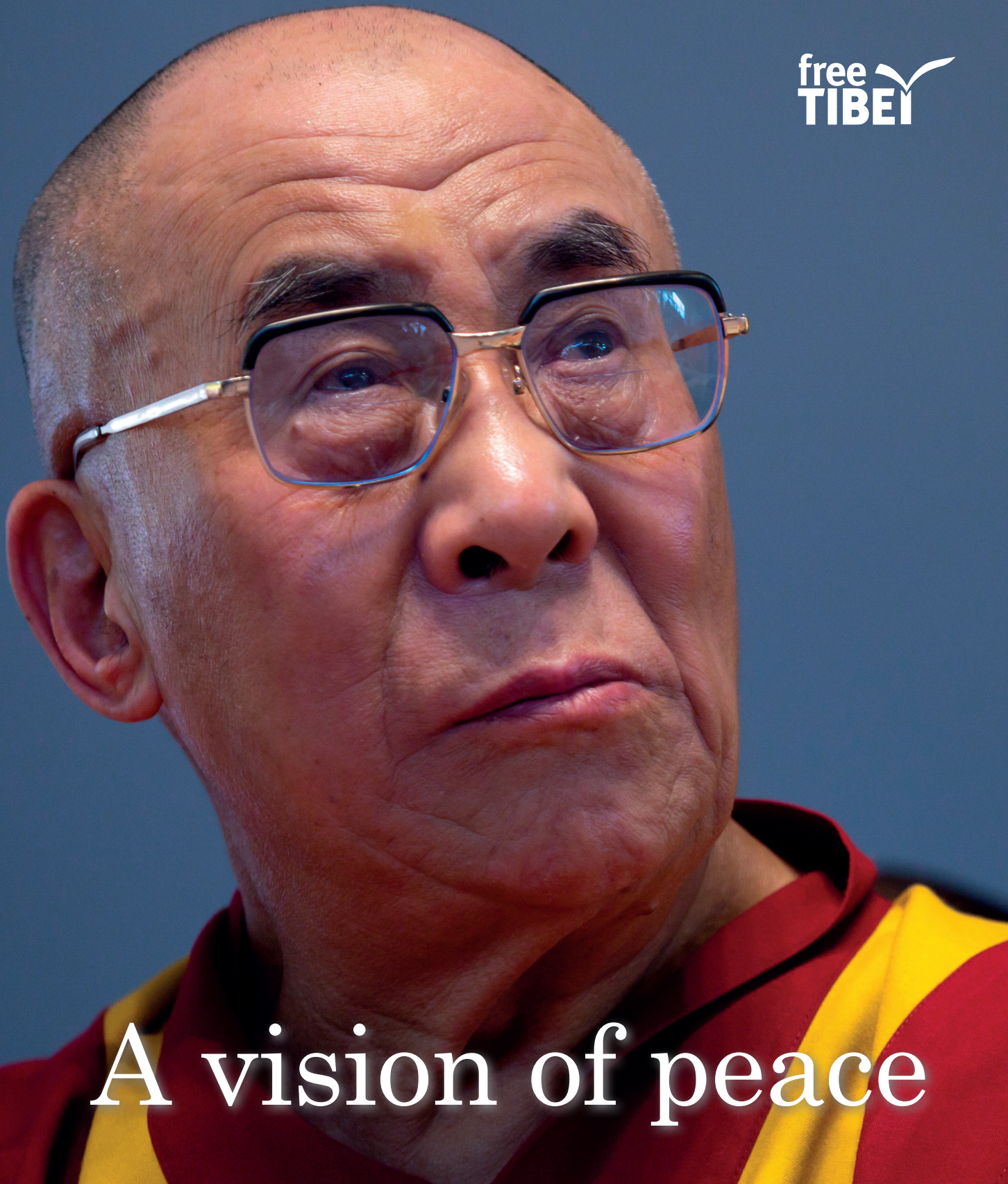


# FREE TIBET

Issue 84 October 2019 | issn 1360-4864

[www.freetibet.org](http://www.freetibet.org)

free  
TIBET 



## A vision of peace

• Google drops Project Dragonfly • A spy on every street • Hidden but not forgotten •

# Dear friends...

Throughout this year we've been focussing on the 60th anniversary of the 1959 uprising. In this, our third and final issue of 2019, we look at the evolution of Tibetan resistance and how it has become synonymous with peacefulness and non-violence. You'll find this article on pages 8 and 9 in the centre.

We are also delighted to announce another campaign victory – this time against Google and Project Dragonfly. You can read all about it on page 3. Campaign victories like this are important for all of us – staff, volunteers, supporters and activists. We all want to feel that what we're doing makes a difference and has an impact. Sometimes it can be hard to see the dents in the implacable façade that China presents to the world. But every time we hit a campaign or advocacy target we can remind ourselves that we are chipping away at China's hold over Tibet. Every win for us is a win for Tibet and a win that involves convincing a major multi-national tech company like Google to do the right thing is definitely worth celebrating.

Another thing worth celebrating is the fact that *The Crossing*, the animated short film that we released in December 2018, has recently been selected for three film festivals, in Argentina, Mexico and India. A lot of people worked very hard to bring *The Crossing* to life and it's wonderful to see the project achieving its aim of bringing Tibet's story to new audiences around the world.

Finally, don't forget to take a look at the catalogue enclosed with this magazine. The fundraising team put a lot of effort into making sure that all our products are not just great quality but are ethically sourced from suppliers who share our values. As always, we have a mix of brand new gifts and old favourites to choose from.

With best wishes



Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren, Free Tibet Director



## Contents



4

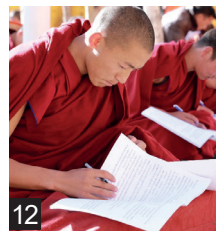
**3 Victory!**  
Google drops Project Dragonfly.

**4 Campaigns update**  
Panchen Lama recognised at Medal of Courage awards; Tashi Wangchuk denied access to his lawyer.

**5 Supplier spotlight**  
Federation of Tibetan Cooperatives India.

**6 A spy on every street**  
How the CCP's surveillance state in Tibet affects us all.

**8 A legacy of peace**  
Strategic non-violence in Tibetan resistance.



12

**10 Tibet Watch**  
The team behind the news.

**11 Hidden but not forgotten**  
Marking the Day of the Disappeared.

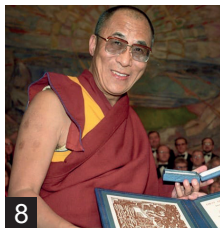
**12 News update**  
Further evictions at Yarchen Gar; Forced to sit law exams; Reciprocal access bill; Lessons taught in Chinese; Chinese politician in Tibet.

**14 Letters**

**15 Supporter activities**  
Hitting the high notes; Music fundraiser in Brighton.



15



8



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Our vision is a free Tibet in which Tibetans are able to determine their own future and the human rights of all are respected.

Free Tibet campaigns for an end to China's occupation of Tibet and for international recognition of Tibetans' right to freedom. We mobilise active support for the Tibetan cause, champion human rights and challenge those whose actions help sustain the occupation.

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**Front cover photo:** The Dalai Lama at Kumbh Mela festival 2010 in Haridwar, India. © Darko Sikman.





# Victory! Google drops Project Dragonfly

In our magazine we often write about the bad news coming from inside Tibet and the challenges that we face in pushing back. So, whenever we at Free Tibet receive some good news, we just have to share it with supporters. In June, we did not just receive good news, we helped create it.

After 10 months of campaigning, we found out, directly from Google, that the company has dropped Project Dragonfly, its controversial plan to build a censored search engine for the Chinese market.

The confirmation came at Google's annual shareholder meeting in San Francisco on 19 June. At the meeting, following questioning, Google's spokesperson confirmed that there were "no plans to offer a search engine in China". These words came only a week after Google's CEO, Sundar Pichai, claimed that the company had scrapped its plans to launch Dragonfly.

We first became aware of Project Dragonfly in 2018, when leaks from staff inside Google revealed that there were top secret plans to build a search engine and

that it would comply with Beijing's notoriously repressive Internet restrictions.

The search engine would have restricted or completely blocked searches for terms that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) objects to, including "human rights", "democracy", "Dalai Lama" and "Tibet", assisting them in concealing their human rights abuses. Dragonfly would also have complied with the CCP's harsh cybersecurity laws. This means that Google would have been obliged to help capture users' data and personal details and make this information available to the Chinese security services.

Throughout the campaign, we and our partners, including Tibet Network, Students for a Free Tibet and corporate campaigners SumOfUs, never stopped pushing Google. Our activities ranged from carrying out global protests and online media briefings to working with journalists to secure international press coverage. Meanwhile our supporters also sent thousands of letters to Google. Inside the company, hundreds of staff who learned about Project Dragonfly protested, with some even resigning from the company.

Those 10 months involved a lot of hard work but, in June, when the pressure paid off and we secured the result, we knew it was worth it. We will keep watch on future developments but for now this is a moment to celebrate.

Free Tibet would like to extend our deepest gratitude to all our supporters who took action and worked alongside us throughout this campaign. It is only because of you that we can do what we do.

Free Tibet and Students for a Free Tibet outside Google's London HQ.



# Campaigns update...

## Panchen Lama recognised at Medal of Courage awards

On 12 July, the Tibet movement gathered for the fourth annual Tenzin Delek Rinpoche Medal of Courage Award.

This year the ceremony was held at Free Tibet's office in London. The Medal of Courage was awarded to Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the Panchen Lama, who turned 30 earlier this year and who has spent 24 years in captivity following his abduction in May 1995. The Chinese government has refused to disclose any information about his whereabouts or condition.

In the absence of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the award was accepted by Sonam Frasi, the Dalai Lama's representative in the UK. Sonam spoke about how he was sad to have to accept the award in these circumstances and restated that Tibetans remained committed to finding out the truth about the Panchen Lama.

The award was created by the International Tibet Network in 2016 to recognise those who have shown a deep commitment to promoting the freedom and rights of the Tibetan people at great personal risk. The award is given every 12 July, in memory of the date that senior monk, community activist and human rights defender Tenzin Delek Rinpoche died in prison in 2015.

Before the award was granted, our Director, Eleanor, presented a short tribute to Palden Gyatso, another Tibetan human rights advocate who passed away on 30 November 2018.



The Panchen Lama in 1995 and an age progression image from 2019.

### Action

Our online action calls on world leaders to put more pressure on China to reveal the location of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and to grant him his freedom. You can access it on our website here: [freetibet.org/where-panchen-lama](http://freetibet.org/where-panchen-lama)

## Authorities continue to deny Tashi Wangchuk access to his lawyer

Tibetan language advocate Tashi Wangchuk remains in prison and has yet again been prevented from seeing his lawyer. Tashi completed his first year in prison, having already spent over two years in detention.

In May, Tashi's lawyer, Lin Qilei, told Free Tibet that he has not been able to see or speak to his client and that his request to visit him had been denied by the authorities. Lin added that Tashi's father had died. A prison guard whom Lin Qilei spoke to agreed to pass the news on to Tashi. Another attempt by Lin Qilei to visit Tashi in July was also rejected.

Tashi is serving a five-year sentence, having been found guilty of "inciting separatism" by a court last year. His arrest and the sentence stem from an interview that Tashi gave to the New York Times in 2015 about his work to ensure that every Tibetan child has access to education in their native tongue.

### Action

Our online action, demanding that Tashi Wangchuk be released, remains active. If you have not already carried out the action or shared it with your contacts, please consider doing so here: [secure.freetibet.org/free-tashi-wangchuk](http://secure.freetibet.org/free-tashi-wangchuk)





# Supplier spotlight: Federation of Tibetan Cooperatives India

The story behind one of our Tibetan suppliers.

As always, something we really enjoy at Free Tibet is bringing you the exciting products from our online shop, which we meticulously source from the highest quality suppliers. One supplier we are delighted to work with is the Federation of Tibetan Cooperatives India (FTCI) and we want to take this opportunity to tell you more about them.

FTCI was established in 2005 and has its headquarters in New Delhi, India. FTCI is a cooperative, meaning it brings together a group of merchandisers and handicraft specialists who are then provided with a platform to sell their ethical goods. Cooperative movements for Tibetans in exile started in 1963 in order to improve the financial stability of Tibetan refugees and their settlements. But there was a lack of communication between different cooperatives, a lack of guidance and limited marketing. FTCI has filled this gap by bringing together 15 cooperatives who now have access to an online marketing platform and support from FTCI advisers. Together, they have a combined staff of 750 people.

FTCI is known in the trade for being one of the top suppliers of quality religious goods, incense, textiles such as tote bags, bed spreads and t-shirts, as well as jewellery. In addition to the outstanding quality of its goods, it is FTCI's ethos and objectives that stand out.

FTCI brings together co-operatives that stand for sustainability, ethical practices and equality. Its number one priority is to 'contribute to the sustainable development and preservation of Tibetan culture and arts by offering better trade conditions to Tibetan artisans'. Free Tibet loves this mission and we are very happy we can stock products that help Tibetan handicrafts thrive.

FTCI also focuses on providing opportunities and platforms for artisans who come from marginalised or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. By doing so, FTCI provides the opportunity for Tibetans to make a living from traditional handicrafts that are grounded in their own culture. FTCI is also dedicated to the sustainable consumption of natural resources. It aims to encourage the use of waste and recycled products by cooperatives in the production process. In light of the excellent work FTCI does to preserve Tibetan culture and our environment, we are delighted to stock several of their products. FTCI provides Free Tibet with the Blue Mala, Tiger's Eye Mala and Lapis Lazuli Mala, which are traditional Buddhist religious aids used for meditation and reciting mantras. We also purchase all of our traditional, and very popular, prayer flags from FTCI.

We are happy to have seen so many of Free Tibet's supporters love their products as much as we do over the years. You can see all of these products and more in our latest catalogue or online at [shop.freetibet.org](http://shop.freetibet.org).



Free Tibet's Fundraising Manager Josey visiting an FTCI tailor making bags in New Delhi, India.

# A spy on every street

How the CCP's surveillance state in Tibet affects us all.

You may have seen it on the news or through social media. Citizens kept under constant surveillance by CCTV cameras and required to pass through checkpoints several times a day. Police and security personnel on every corner. The extensive monitoring of telephone and Internet communications. And, most chillingly of all, an enormous prison system spread across thousands of miles, where at least a million people have been detained because they were caught breaking the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s oppressive laws, caught expressing their culture, caught living their daily lives.

This repression is taking place to the north of Tibet. To the Uyghurs who live there, this cruel surveillance state is called East Turkestan. Those living in the rest of the world, and who have read the reports, may be more familiar with the Chinese name: Xinjiang.

Tibetans around the world have found common cause with the Uyghur people. They are horrified by the news that has emerged of their treatment by the CCP and they also see something familiar in the methods used to monitor them, the constant surveillance that Uyghurs are put under, and the way everyone is treated as a suspect. The repression currently being inflicted on millions of Uyghurs was pioneered, tested and refined in Tibet.

Tibetans have faced the full force of CCP cruelty for as long as the occupation has lasted, but after the Tibetan uprising in 2008 something changed. As the Beijing Olympics drew nearer, the eyes of the world were on China. Then, suddenly, they switched to Tibet. What they saw was shocking in its brutality: peaceful protesters met with overwhelming force, causing international outcry. Since 2008, the CCP has vowed that the only eyes on Tibet shall be its own. The so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) was locked down, making it harder than ever for journalists and other unwelcome visitors to enter. Meanwhile, within the TAR, the CCP set about creating a giant and intrusive system of surveillance.

The stated goal is 'stability maintenance'. In practice, this means tighter controls on Tibetan society, identifying and punishing Tibetans who speak out or criticise the authorities and stopping protests from taking place rather than responding to them. As Wangden, Tibet Watch's senior researcher put it: "In Tibet today there is no space to breathe".

In August 2011, Chen Quanguo was appointed as Party Secretary of the TAR. He would become the key individual behind the blanket surveillance and heavy police presence that Tibetans live under today. During Chen's time in office, the TAR would advertise 12,313 policing-related

positions – over four times as many positions as the preceding five years.

Chen introduced other innovations. The Tibetan capital Lhasa was divided into a grid, consisting of small units of the city that were easier to monitor and police. Police stations were built that were no more than 500 metres apart; the closest two are reportedly only 15 metres apart. These police stations gather information on the inhabitants of their unit, sometimes consisting of just five to ten households, and track every person and vehicle that enters and leaves the area.

Just over a year after being appointed, Chen declared that the grid system had been a success and that it should be spread to “the towns, rural areas, and temples” of the TAR. He was backed up by one of the most senior politicians in China, Yu Zhengsheng, who called for the system to be implemented across Tibet to form “nets in the sky and traps on the ground.”

The CCP has channelled almost unimaginable resources into this ambition. Tens of thousands of security personnel have also been dispatched to Tibet’s villages to gather residents’ personal details. They also ask more sensitive questions, such as villagers’ opinions on the Dalai Lama and whether their families were involved in the 2008 protests, and investigate the social network of each inhabitant to find potential sources of dissent or protest.

Meanwhile, some of the most sinister developments are taking place quietly in the background. The Chinese government has been working closely with tech experts to develop facial recognition software that can be used to ethnically profile Tibetans. They have

also collaborated with the Chinese company iFlytek to build an extensive database of voice pattern samples, enabling the security services to identify voices in phone conversations. Tibetans already live under a system in which their phone and Internet communications are monitored, with numerous cases of arrests and prison sentences for acts such as criticising the government online or sharing pictures of the Dalai Lama. These new profiling systems increase the risk of dissenters being identified and detained.

In 2016, Chen Quanguo was rewarded for his efforts in Tibet by being appointed the Party Secretary of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, which he still governs today, implementing the policies he tested on Tibet on an even larger scale. And it is not just those living under CCP rule who are affected. In the United Kingdom, CCTV cameras developed by Hikvision, a Chinese company whose majority owner is the CCP itself, have been purchased by several councils. According to some reports, these CCTV systems, which are connected to the Internet, have been installed in Portcullis House, a building used every day by hundreds of Members of Parliament. A member of the House of Lords, Lord West, likened the plan to MPs having a spy in each of their offices.

The spread of this surveillance technology to other countries is a reminder that what the CCP is doing to Tibetans, brutal in its own right, has implications for the rest of the world. The most appropriate response can also be found in Tibet. Despite the surveillance and the suffocating restrictions on their lives, Tibetans resist.

Tibetans have faced the full force of CCP cruelty for as long as the occupation has lasted, but after the Tibetan uprising in 2008 something changed.

Opposite: A CCTV camera hidden inside a prayer wheel.  
Below: Police raiding an Internet cafe in Tibet.

## Can you help...?

Free Tibet is currently working on what will be the most comprehensive report yet on the CCP’s surveillance in Tibet. The report will cover every angle of the repressive surveillance state, from military patrols on the streets to the use of facial recognition technology.

Tibetans continue to resist the giant and intrusive system of surveillance, but they should not have to. Our report will be the first step in raising international awareness and generating government and UN pressure on China to scale back its surveillance.

Please donate today to support this work and ensure that we can present the report to key government bodies, the UN and the EU. Visit [freetibet.org/surveillance](http://freetibet.org/surveillance), or use the form supplied with this magazine.



# A legacy of peace

The international Tibet movement is generally perceived as intrinsically peaceful and non-violent. The same is usually said of Tibetans living inside Tibet and the ways in which they resist the ongoing occupation. In fact, peacefulness and non-violence have become part of the identity of the Tibetan people, their freedom struggle and the international movement that supports it.

There is nothing wrong with this perception but it has not always been this way. As we reflect, once more, on the 60 years since the 1959 uprising, we look at how the Tibetan freedom struggle has transitioned from an armed resistance to a movement synonymous with peacefulness and strategic non-violence.

Once upon a time, Tibet was an empire, controlling territory in Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Bhutan. It collected tributes from its neighbours, including the Tang dynasty in China. When the Tang attempted to stop paying tribute in 763AD, Tibet invaded and occupied the Chinese capital for 15 days. Hostilities between China and Tibet were eventually concluded with the signing of the Sino-Tibetan treaty of 821/823. However, once Tibet embraced Buddhism, later in the 9th century, the country went through a unique political transformation which included a process of voluntary disarmament.

When the Mongols rose to power, Tibet preemptively surrendered but was able to build influence, nonetheless, through the provision of spiritual guides and mentors to the khans, the rulers of the Mongol Empire. In subsequent centuries they followed much the same model, building cultural and spiritual influence rather than military power. While the Tibetan army was never entirely disbanded, by the time China invaded, in 1950, it was a mere few thousand soldiers and had no chance against the 40,000 troops sent by Mao Zedong.

In 1958 the Chushi Gangdruk was officially formed. This was an organisation of guerrilla soldiers, mainly from the Kham region, who had been fighting Chinese forces in the eastern areas of Tibet for a number of years. They played a key role in the national uprising in 1959 and also took responsibility for escorting the Dalai Lama out of Lhasa and into exile. Following the brutal suppression of the 1959 uprising, the Chushi Gangdruk continued to mount guerrilla operations from a base in Mustang, Nepal, until the mid-70s.

In 1974 the Dalai Lama formally renounced the use of violence and also Tibet's aspiration of full independence. He did so in an attempt to engage China in dialogue, hoping to secure a peaceful solution that would protect Tibetan culture and identity without sacrificing any more Tibetan lives. According to the Tibetan government in exile, around 430,000 Tibetans had been killed during the 1959 uprising alone.

The Dalai Lama sent a taped message to the Chushi Gandruk fighters in Mustang and asked them to lay down their arms. He also started sharing his thoughts on the 'Middle Way Approach', a policy of pursuing genuine autonomy rather than independence.

With this new strategy in place, the Dalai Lama started stepping up his efforts to raise awareness and build support in other countries, particularly in the West. He succeeded in becoming one of the most popular religious leaders in the world, renowned for his advocacy for peace and compassion.

When protests next flared up inside Tibet they were very different to the 1959 uprising – they were non-violent and they were led by monks and nuns. In the 50s, monks and nuns who wanted to participate in the uprising were obliged to disrobe and give up their vows as the use of violence was forbidden by monastic law. In 1987 they chose a form of protest which was compatible with Buddhist principles and with the Dalai Lama's position on non-violence. Instead of taking up arms, the protestors simply marched through the streets of Lhasa shouting slogans, they put up posters, they handed out leaflets, they circumambulated the Jokhang Temple, burned incense and gathered in the Barkor Square to offer prayers.

China's disproportionately violent response was noted by international media and governments and, perhaps most importantly, by people around the

“...he had showed willingness to compromise and seek reconciliation despite brutal violations.”





world. Many of the leading Tibet support groups, including Free Tibet, were formed around this time and the decade that followed saw the Tibet movement gain considerable momentum.

Meanwhile, the Dalai Lama's influence and his efforts to promote peaceful resistance were noted in other quarters. An invitation to address the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus in 1987 provided a platform for him to announce his Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet. The following year he presented the Strasbourg Proposal for Tibet to members of the European Parliament. In 1989 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and the Nobel Committee commented that it had "weighed heavily in the Tibetan leader's favour that he had showed willingness to compromise and seek reconciliation despite brutal violations." They would undoubtedly have seen images of Chinese soldiers beating unarmed Buddhist monks in Lhasa between October 1987 and March 1989.

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize is something which Tibetans have taken to heart and the anniversary is commemorated on 10 December every year. The commitment to peaceful resistance continued and even the 2008 uprising was predominantly non-violent.

In the decade since the last uprising, Tibetans have found new and innovative ways of maintaining peaceful resistance. One of the best known tactics is the Lhakar movement. This originated inside Tibet in 2008 and was later adopted by Tibetans in exile. Wednesday is the *rla-sa* (soul day) of the Dalai Lama and Tibetans have a long tradition of conducting special rituals on this day to pray for their leader's health and longevity. Lhakar involves extending the existing traditions to encompass small acts of resistance e.g. wearing traditional dress, eating only Tibetan food, listening to independent Tibetan radio, shopping only in Tibetan-run businesses and speaking only Tibetan.

Tenzin Dorjee (known to most of the Tibet movement as Tendor) has written extensively on the topic of Tibetan non-violent resistance and describes the impact of the Lhakar movement as follows:

"This phenomenon gave rise to a series of practical actions that went beyond symbolism and, eventually, beyond a once-per-week affair. Turning their homes, workplaces and cyberspace into extended domains of resistance, Tibetans began to simultaneously open up more social, political and economic space. Emphasizing private acts of resistance over public acts of protest, Lhakar decentralized the resistance and empowered the individual. Rather than expecting freedom to come from a top-

down policy in Beijing, people started to control their own daily thoughts, decisions and actions, thereby creating a parallel world of freedom alongside China's superstructure of repression and captivity.

"In the past there was a notion, particularly among Tibetan elders, that a culture's survival was at the mercy of politics. However, the advent of Lhakar shattered this disempowering narrative. A growing number of Tibetans began using art, literature, poetry and music as vehicles for expressing their faith in the Dalai Lama, love of their homeland, and the desire for freedom. Songs with politically charged lyrics or music videos became hits. For the first time in decades, perhaps centuries, Tibetans were wielding culture to save politics, instead of waiting for politics to save culture. Tibetans were finally tapping into their rich cultural heritage to produce a powerful set of nonviolent tools. In just a few years, the Lhakar movement has transformed Tibetan resistance."

Yet, the question remains: Has it worked? People may laud the ongoing commitment to peace and non-violence but Tibet is still occupied. It is perhaps not too surprising that some people, including some Tibetans, occasionally wonder whether physical weapons would be more effective.

One response is that it would take a lot more than a few guns to win a military war against China. However, one of the best answers to this question was provided by Thubten Samdup during his time as the Dalai Lama's representative. Sitting in Free Tibet's London office, he explained how we must all do everything we can to ensure that the strategy of peaceful resistance continues, no matter how long it takes. If Tibetans, or Tibet supporters, were to resort to violence it would send the most dreadful message to future generations. It would tell them that peaceful methods fail and the only way to succeed is through violence. That is not the message that we want to send to the future. We want to be able to tell future generations that violence and brutality can be conquered by peacefulness, compassion and creativity.



"Tibetans were wielding culture to save politics, instead of waiting for politics to save culture."

Above: Tenzin Dorjee (Tendor) is a Tibetan writer and activist based in New York. He is the author of *The Tibetan Nonviolent Struggle: A Strategic and Historical Analysis*, a strategic advisor at the Tibet Action Institute and former Executive Director of Students for a Free Tibet.  
Left: The Dalai Lama receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.

# Tibet Watch – the team behind the news

In 2016, we revealed the demolitions and mass evictions taking place at Larung Gar Buddhist Institute in eastern Tibet. Despite intense control and surveillance at the site, we were able to follow events on the ground and secure international media attention as well as strong statements from politicians and international institutions. Most importantly, we were able to shine a light on human rights abuses that China had hoped to carry out secretly and with complete impunity.

In recent years, we have reported on scores of Tibetan political prisoners, from Tashi Wangchuk in 2015 to Dolkar and Wangchen in April this year. The international attention we are able to bring to their cases can generate vital improvements for the individual prisoners. Testimony from released prisoners often attributes improvements in their treatment to the impact of campaigns and advocacy carried out by Tibet groups.

The strength of our advocacy was highlighted last year when China attempted to have our report excluded from the review by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Their attempts failed and, ultimately, generated additional attention for Tibet and the human rights issues of occupation.

And over the last few months, we have revealed how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) forces Tibetans to replace images of the Dalai Lama in their homes with pictures of Party leaders. The story has gone on to receive widespread media attention and reveal just how intrusive and repressive the CCP's rule in Tibet really is.

The source behind all of this work is our research partner, Tibet Watch.

With over a decade of experience, Tibet Watch has become the world's most effective organisations for sourcing and disseminating news from Tibet. Their research team takes great pride in ensuring that all of their information is thoroughly checked and verified. Over the years, governments, international institutions and media outlets have all come to trust and respect the reliability of Tibet Watch's reports. It also creates a solid foundation for Free Tibet's campaigning and outreach.

While Free Tibet makes noise about the human rights abuses in Tibet and campaigns for justice, Tibet Watch works quietly and expertly to secure information from one of the least accessible places in the world.

We are now delighted to announce that Tibet Watch has a new website where you can read all of the news from Tibet direct from the source: [tibetwatch.org](http://tibetwatch.org).

The invaluable work of our research partner.



L-R: Screenshot of the new Tibet Watch website; In 2016, Tibet Watch revealed details of demolitions at Larung Gar.

# Hidden but not forgotten



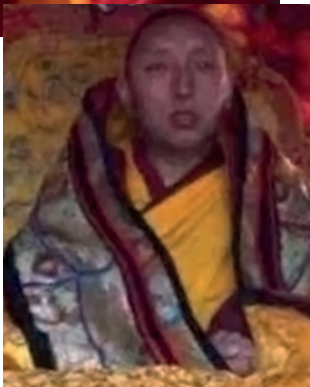
Marking the Day of the Disappeared.

Every 30 August, Free Tibet marks one of the most important days of the year. International Day of the Disappeared is not a cultural celebration or the anniversary of a protest. It is not a day for celebration. It recognises the suffering created by the practice of enforced disappearances.

Enforced disappearances occur when a person is seized and taken to a hidden place. Their location and their well-being are kept secret from the public and from their friends and family. Keeping them secret keeps them outside of the law. Most Tibetans already face a range of daily insults and abuses, but those who are disappeared are the most vulnerable of all.

Every Tibetan who has been taken away has their own story. Two senior monks, Khenpo Pagah and Geshe Orgyen, took part in a gathering at Chogri Monastery in eastern Tibet in 2016. During the ceremony, Tibetans gathered to pray for the Dalai Lama, who was undergoing surgery in the United States. Days later, the pair disappeared. They have not been seen since.

Geshe Orgyen and Khenpo Pagah, who were forcibly disappeared in early 2016.



Later that year, Jamyang Lodru, a monk from eastern Tibet, was seized by police. Witnesses recalled how the police suddenly appeared, covered his head, cuffed his hands and drove away in a police vehicle. He has not been seen since and his family have not been given permission to communicate with him. Jamyang Lodru's place of imprisonment is still kept secret.

And then there is perhaps the most notorious disappearance of all, that of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the Panchen Lama. He was taken into "protective custody" in 1995 and has not been seen since. The Chinese government has refused to disclose any information about where he is or how he is, beyond the repeated claim that he is "happy" and "does not want to be disturbed".

These disappearances are the burden of an occupying force that does not tolerate protest, opposition or even unauthorised expressions of culture or religion. Those who are taken are cut off from the world – from family members, friends and fellow monks and nuns. In secrecy, outside the law, those who have been disappeared are routinely mistreated and often tortured.

Authorities justify the arrests using broadly-worded state security laws. "Espionage", "inciting separatism" and "terrorism" are all charges that allow the authorities to hold detainees in secret.

They prevent detainees from access to a lawyer or family visits. They also allow for long sentences, a punishment that is all but inevitable given China's staggeringly high conviction rates; recent statistics show that 99.9 per cent of those who stand trial are found guilty.

These stories are not easy to read, but at Free Tibet we have made it our mission to find out everything we can about these cases. Only by doing this can we push China to reveal the location of the detainees and prisoners it is hiding and to release them. It is a difficult goal requiring months, maybe years, of work, but the concessions which may be granted – an early release, a family visit, improved treatment in prison – can make a tangible difference.

Every 30 August, we remember those who the Chinese government would try and make us forget. Erasing someone's physical presence from their home, community or monastery cannot erase their memory. Those left behind, left to wonder what has happened to their brother or sister, father or mother, daughter or son, are also the victims of enforced disappearances. Their memory of their loved ones is a source of pain, but it also creates a slender but unbreakable link between the prisoner and the outside world. It is this bond that makes the Day of the Disappeared a day not just of sadness, but also determination. It reminds us why we can never give up.

**IN THE DARK**

You can learn more about enforced disappearances and get involved with our campaign to help Tibet's missing prisoners by visiting: [freetibet.org/dark](http://freetibet.org/dark)

# News update...

## Further evictions and repression at Yarchen Gar

A series of evictions has taken place at the religious community of Yarchen Gar in Kardze, eastern Tibet, with large numbers of monks and nuns forced to leave their homes. The site, one of the largest Buddhist communities in the world, has been subject to waves of demolitions and forced removals of residents in recent years.

Evictions restarted in early May and were primarily aimed at monks and nuns who hail from areas of Tibet governed as the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Free Tibet's research partner, Tibet Watch, has been working to verify the precise number of monks and nuns who have been evicted, including claims by one anonymous source that 3,500 people have been forced out of the site.

Among those forcibly removed were 70 nuns who are originally from the region of Jomda County in the TAR. Following their removal, the nuns were taken to detention centres, where they have been subjected to patriotic re-education. As part of this process, the nuns were ordered to praise the People's Republic of China and to denounce the Dalai Lama.



Yarchen Gar in Pelyul County, eastern Tibet.

## 30,000 monks and nuns forced to sit exams on Chinese law

The Chinese government has forced around 30,000 monks and nuns from major monasteries inside the Tibet Autonomous Region to learn Chinese law and take exams on it.

The exams, which are run by the Justice Department of the TAR, the United Front Work Department and the Religious Bureau, include questions on the Chinese constitution, religious affairs, national security and other related laws like anti-espionage and anti-terrorism. Those who refuse to take the exams face possible detention, interrogation or other penalties.

Three major monasteries in the TAR, Sera, Gaden and Drepung, were among the sites where residents were made to sit the exams. Senior Chinese officials, including the Deputy Director of the District People's Congress, Xu Xueguang, made inspections of monasteries while exams were underway.



Monks take a Chinese legal exam in Gaden Monastery, Lhasa.

## Reciprocal Access Bill introduced to Parliament

In July, Member of Parliament Tim Loughton introduced a Bill to counter the restrictions on access to Tibet that China imposes on British nationals.

The Tibet Reciprocal Access Bill seeks to emulate the successful Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA), which was passed in the United States of America in December 2018.

Like the RATA, Loughton's proposal, if it enters into British law, would require annual reporting on restrictions imposed on British nationals who try to enter the Tibet Autonomous Region, be they citizens, journalists or diplomats. It would identify the officials responsible for these restrictions and deny them access to the UK. In his presentation of the Bill, Loughton also highlighted the effects that the restrictions have on Tibetan refugees, who are unable to enter the TAR to visit their families.

In a video to accompany the presentation of the Bill, Loughton said: "We need people to be able to go and expose some of the horrendous human rights abuses in Tibet". He added that the law would "say to China – you need to open up, we need to expose these human rights abuses, you need to treat Tibetans fairly".

## School lessons to be taught in Chinese

Chinese Communist Party authorities have ordered primary and middle schools in Golog, eastern Tibet, to teach lessons in Chinese instead of Tibetan. The policy will be implemented during the autumn term this year. According to an announcement from the Golog Prefecture Education Department, the change is aimed at “providing more academic opportunities for the students”.

The move means Tibetan will only be used in Tibetan language classes and not in the rest of the curriculum. According to Free Tibet’s research partner Tibet Watch, Tibetans in the area are contesting the order, with many seeing it as an attempt to systematically undermine the language in a region that is primarily populated by Tibetans.

Some Tibetan intellectuals in the region have voiced their opposition to the policy in writing. They include Golog Palgyan, who published an essay on social media, urging authorities to immediately stop the policy.

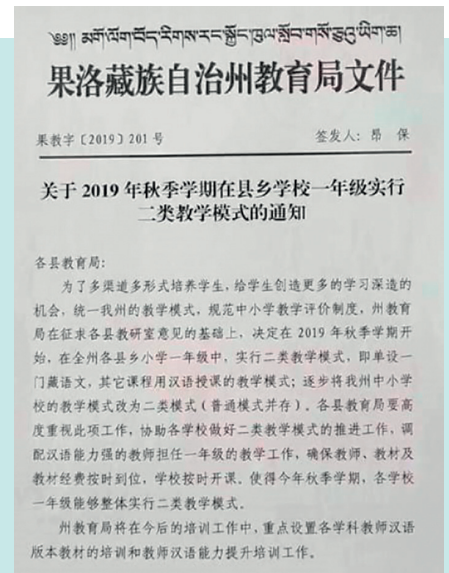
## Senior Chinese politician visits Tibet to combat nationalism

Wang Yang, a senior Chinese politician, visited eastern Tibet in May as part of an effort to promote “national unity” and raise awareness of new CCP policies on religion.

The visit from Wang Yang, who is a member of China’s top decision making body, the Politburo Standing Committee, took place between 25 and 27 May. His objective of promoting unity appears to be part of a wider campaign by the CCP to combat Tibetan nationalism.

During the tour, Wang and his team of officials visited Tibetan townships and nomadic areas in Kardze, as well as the Buddhist community of Larung Gar, where over 3,000 monks, nuns and students were forced to leave in 2016 and 2017 and thousands of homes and buildings were torn down to make way for tourist infrastructure.

Wang Yang spoke publicly about the importance of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s new policies and programmes for Tibet which include the “sinicisation” of religion and the promotion of “lawful administration” and “unity” in the country. The official told the people in the region to fight against the forces of “separatism” and ordered monastic leaders to improve management to guard against infiltration by “foreign forces”, which is often a reference by the CCP to the exiled Dalai Lama.

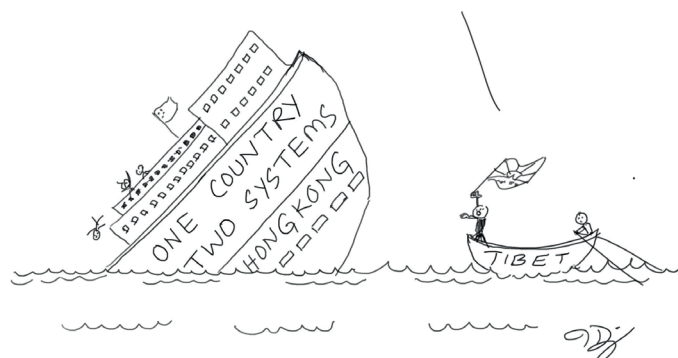


Notification issued by Golog Prefecture Education Department earlier this year.



Politburo Standing Committee member Wang Yang surveys Tibet.

“Hey wait! Let us on board!”



Cartoon by Tenzin (Tendor) Dorjee

# Letters



FRANCOIS DE HALLEUX

If you have a question or comment that you would like to see published in the next magazine, do get in touch with us by email at [letters@freetibet.org](mailto:letters@freetibet.org), over the phone on 020 7324 4605 or by post to:  
Letters, Free Tibet,  
28 Charles Square,  
London N1 6HT.

Please note we cannot guarantee publication of each letter we receive. Thank you!

As a retired teacher in Scotland I am wondering about the damage being done in Scottish schools by the Confucius Project. Many Primary and Secondary schools have teachers from China present weekly, giving lessons about China and teaching Mandarin. The visual aids they use include maps that totally disregard the presence and history of Tibetans and their homeland supporting a pro-Chinese attitude, supporting an ignorance of the rights of the people.

In the school I worked in, pupils clearly enjoyed the lessons, colouring in, making lanterns and doing calligraphy etc. but of course were unaware of the underlying issues. Schools have offered to give information about Tibet separately but I am unaware of this happening anywhere. Schools are clearly tempted by the money offered by the Chinese government due to the lack of funding from elsewhere. It worries me that this scenario is going ahead without seemingly any supervision from the powers that be. Is there any overview or monitoring of the information being given?

I am sure this is a scheme you are aware of and would value your thoughts on it, but feel it is something that I would like to act on locally at least.

**John Morton, Shetland**

Thank you for writing to us. Confucius Classrooms and their university equivalent, Confucius Institutes, are something that we have been following and working on over the years. We share your view that the set-up of Confucius Classrooms, and the lack of transparency from local councils that work with them, pose a range of concerns regarding academic freedom. We have heard accounts of staff being put under pressure to adhere to teaching materials that are written from a Chinese Communist Party perspective.

We support any increase in opportunities for students to learn Chinese or to learn about Chinese history and culture, but the conclusions reached by Dr Tao Zhang, a lecturer based in the UK, sum up our concerns well: "the Confucius Institute is an extension of the Chinese education system, directly controlled by the state and having the same ideological and propaganda roles as schools and universities in China."

You could write to local authorities and request information on how they came to the decision to work with Confucius Classrooms, and whether they can demonstrate any plans they have to ensure that academic freedom is protected.

Thank you for your recent issue of the Free Tibet magazine (Issue 83) where I was horrified to read about the treatment of Wangchen and Dolkar who were arrested after peaceful demonstrations in Sershul in April. I would like to request materials to write to the Chinese authorities by post as advertised. I have also written to Kerry McCarthy MP asking if she could raise this issue with All-Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet and once again, I've sent a letter to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office – though I don't hold out much hope there! Thanks once again for the wonderful work that you do.  
**Sam Crawford, Essex**

We are grateful to Sam, and other readers, who got involved in the campaign by writing letters and contacting their MPs, many of whom are genuinely interested in Tibet when they are contacted. Kerry McCarthy MP in particular has been a strong voice for Tibet.

The cases of Dolkar and Wangchen in our last magazine attracted lots of support and several readers wrote to us or called us requesting materials. We are still happy to provide supporters with a Chinese-language letter, an envelope with the English and Chinese-language addresses, and an English translation of the letter. A small letter to China from the UK should cost £1.45.

# Supporter activities

## Hitting the high notes

In July, longstanding Tibet supporters Carole Mahoney and Neil Bowman showed what happens when you combine a serious altitude with some serious attitude, delivering what easily must have been the highest piano recital that has ever taken place. The pair worked with a local team to transport a piano from its usual home in a school in Leh, northern India, to the Taglang La Pass in the Himalayas, 5328 metres above sea level. There, an audience gathered, made up of locals and some friends of Carole and Neil, wearing bow ties over their thermal jackets as they watched Neil play under the falling snow. At one point they were joined by some truck drivers, who paused on their journey over the pass to check the curious scene at the roadside. They were treated to a range of music, from modern compositions to classics by Beethoven, Chopin and Haydn. The recital, jokingly promoted by the pair as an “act of musical folly”, had a serious point, raising over £5,000 for several local causes.



Above: Carole and Neil performing in the snow.  
Left: The show in Brighton.



## Music fundraiser in Brighton

Our huge appreciation goes to Jim Tarran for hosting an evening of live music and entertainment at the Latest Music Bar in Brighton with all profits going to Free Tibet. The night featured Lisa Nichols Rider, Infant Cubbit, The Gyrotory Sound System and The Anāhata Sound System as well as a raffle. Thank you Jim!

For the latest information on activities by Tibet groups and contact details for the groups themselves, visit our local groups page at [freetibet.org/localgroups](http://freetibet.org/localgroups). If you're interested in setting up a group or fundraising for Free Tibet, please get in touch with us at [mail@freetibet.org](mailto:mail@freetibet.org).

Free Tibet is delighted to welcome new *Mi Tse* (life long) supporters: Howard Huws and Sarah Strong.



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