

FREE TIBET

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The Tibetan Plateau in meltdown



free
TIBET

• Boots for Tibet • United in struggle • Yarchen Gar siege •

Dear friends...

This magazine arrives with a new decade as well as a new year – a time of change and opportunity. The world seems to be full of crisis and protest at the moment and it's tempting to think that everything is getting worse. But protests only happen because people care enough to get out on the streets and fight for what they believe in. Viewed from that perspective, they're an incredibly positive sign. Progress in human rights has rarely happened anywhere without someone fighting for it.

There is change of a different sort happening at Free Tibet but I hope it will be equally positive. As some of you already know, I am stepping down as Director. I resigned last year and will have left by the time this magazine reaches you. It was a very difficult decision for me as I remain fully committed to the cause and it has been a privilege to have the opportunity to lead a campaign which I first joined as a supporter over 20 years ago. I would like to thank everyone who has engaged with our work during this time. We have had some incredible successes and we could not have done it without you.

I will be taking some time out from work altogether and moving back to Scotland, which I'm very much looking forward to. But I'm also looking forward to watching the Free Tibet team achieve further success over the coming years. I'm very glad that I've been able to step down at a time when things are going well – I would have hated to do it any other way. We have a great group of people who are all very talented and professional and who believe in what they're doing. Having the right team really makes a difference and I have no doubt there is more to come from this one.

With best wishes



Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren, Free Tibet Director



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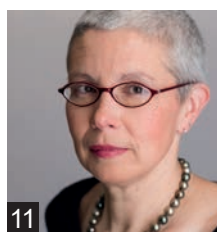
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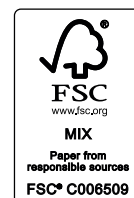
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Our vision is a free Tibet in which Tibetans are able to determine their own future and the human rights of all are respected.

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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Boots for Tibet

Doing our bit to support Tibet's footballers.

One of our key missions at Free Tibet, arguably the one that guides all of our work, is solidarity with the Tibetan people. This is most recognisable in our campaigns to support political prisoners or our protests against companies that exploit Tibet. But sometimes it can take a less conventional form. It was for this reason that we paid a visit to the Tibetan National Sports Association (TNSA) in November with a gift: two bags full of footballs and football boots.

The donations were organised by the Confederation of Independent Football Associations. CONIFA's guiding philosophy is that everyone should have the chance to assert their identity through football, including the millions around the world who currently have no country to call their own. For this reason, every two years it organises the CONIFA Football World Cup, the most recent of which was held in London in 2018 and saw Tibet compete for the first time.

Tibet is still a developing football nation, with neither the men's or women's team able to get much playing time and both lacking resources. Players are based in locations as distant as Australia and the USA, meaning that they seldom have opportunities to

practice together. Another key problem is the lack of resources; Dharamsala lacks football pitches and boots and balls are in short supply.

CONIFA are trying to address this, collecting second-hand boots of all sizes from donors in the UK. All they needed was a way to get the boots to Dharamsala. Free Tibet was happy to help, even if getting two huge bags full of boots to Dharamsala was a daunting prospect.

In November we stopped by the TNSA, located in the Tibetan Children's Village on a hilltop overlooking the already elevated Dharamsala. The TNSA's office is small, with a handful of staff, including the men's football coach, who on the day of our visit was busy helping to pack copies of the TNSA's 2020 calendar – one of the ways that the association raises funds. The office is a repository of Tibet's short but growing football history. Pennants hanging from the walls displayed memories of past matches, including Tibet's first World Cup campaign.

It is our hope that the footballers of tomorrow can write a new chapter in Tibet's sporting history. The gratitude from the TNSA staff was evident, and a reminder that there are many ways to help Tibet.

Above: Free Tibet delivering the football boots to the Tibetan National Sports Association.

Tibetans show solidarity with Hong Kong.



United in struggle

STUDIO INCENDIO 2019

Described as the “revolution of our time”, Hong Kong has been the centre of mass, ongoing anti-government protests since 9 June 2019. Huge political unrest, repression by the police and university strikes have swallowed the global financial city for over half a year. The protesters’ steadfastness in the face of police brutality and an unsympathetic government has drawn attention and solidarity from people around the world. This includes Tibetans, who have seen their own struggle echoed amid the tear gas and defiant chanting on the streets of Hong Kong.

The protests were sparked by a proposed extradition bill, which would have allowed criminal suspects in Hong Kong to be extradited to mainland China, where an estimated 99.9 per cent of court cases result in conviction. This put activists and journalists at risk, not just of extradition but also torture and ill-treatment. It also raised fears of the erosion of Hong Kong’s independent judicial system, democracy and human rights.

In response to the protests, the Hong Kong government suspended the bill on 15 June and then formally withdrew it on 23 October. However, the protesters are calling for their other demands to be met too, including for the protests not to be characterised as a “riot”, amnesty for arrested protesters, an independent inquiry into alleged police brutality and implementation of complete universal suffrage.

The protests are rooted in a deeper context, which can be seen in the 2014 Umbrella Movement – a series of protests in late 2014 against reforms to Hong Kong’s electoral system proposed by China. We can clearly deduce the worrying trend of China trying to exert an increasing influence on Hong Kong through political measures. These protests have all had the same overall goal of a liberated Hong Kong free from China’s influence.

Hongkongers have never had full control over their own city. It was a British colony from 1841 – with a brief Japanese occupation during World War II – before being handed back to China in 1997. This ushered in a “one country, two systems” framework, which has allowed Hongkongers to enjoy certain civil liberties and some autonomy. However, their right to self-governance is still limited and today that right is at risk.

The protests are still ongoing with the conflict between the police and the protesters getting increasingly violent. Protesters and even members of the public have been subjected to tear gas, rubber bullets and pepper spray. Several deaths and suicides have also been linked to the protests.

Despite the continuing struggle amidst police brutality, an uncertain future and an identity



BOTH IMAGES: TPI & YANGCHEN DOLMA, 2019

crisis, Hongkongers have continued to endure. In Hong Kong’s local elections on 24 November 2019, the pro-democracy camp won with a landslide and now controls 17 of the 18 councils. The turnout for these local elections was more than 71 per cent, compared with just 47 per cent in 2015. Meanwhile, they have gained the support of the USA, where the Human Rights and Democracy Act has been signed into law. This protects Hong Kong and monitors Beijing’s activity there.

The Hong Kong protests have made global headline news for months and have highlighted China’s anti-democratic stance as well as the resistance to it. While the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has worked hard to build and present an all-powerful image, the Hong Kong protests have countered the idea that the CCP is an invincible, omnipotent regime. Tibetans can be inspired by this. Tibetans, along with Uyghurs and Taiwanese people, have organised demonstrations in cities across the world to show solidarity with the Hong Kong protesters, with events in India, Australia, the USA and the UK, to name only a few.

Free Tibet recognises that the Hong Kong protesters are in a shared struggle with Tibetans, Uyghurs and other peoples under CCP rule. In addition to showing our solidarity online and at demonstrations, we recently signed a statement along with a number of human rights organisations, such as Amnesty International, pushing for support from the UN for the Hong Kong protesters.

The Hong Kong protests have countered the idea that the CCP is invincible.

Left: Protesters brave heavy rain as they march against the 2019 Hong Kong extradition bill on 18 August 2019; Above: Tibetan Youth Congress activists showing solidarity with protesters in Hong Kong; Tibetan women with patches on their eyes to show support for Hong Kong.

Campaigns update...

Advocacy in Geneva

In September, Free Tibet and its research partner, Tibet Watch, attended the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.

There they joined the Tibet Advocacy Coalition, a project made up of several Tibet organisations which works to raise Tibet with the UN's various human rights bodies.



We were there to raise the worrying crackdown on peaceful Tibetan protesters, community organisers, teachers and environmental activists. This crackdown has been stepped up following the launch of a Chinese Communist Party campaign in 2018 against what the Party calls “criminal gangs” and “underworld forces”. So far the campaign has seen at least 400 arrests across Tibet, although this number is likely to be far higher.

While in Geneva we met with diplomats from several countries to express our concerns. We also collaborated with the World Uyghur Congress and activists from Hong Kong in an event about the rule of law in China. During the hour-long event, panellists outlined the harsh measures that have been imposed on Hongkongers, Tibetans, Uyghurs and Chinese dissidents. The event highlighted the solidarity between these groups, which can also be seen in our story on the Hong Kong protests on pages 4-5.

Free Tibet and the Tibet Advocacy Coalition at the UN in Geneva.

Free Tibet teams up to challenge Apple

Free Tibet has teamed up with other Tibet groups, Uyghurs and consumer rights experts to challenge the giant multinational company Apple.

Since 2017, Apple has been denying people living under China's rule access to a free and open Internet. They have removed 1,000 virtual private networks (VPNs) from their App Store in China at the request of the Chinese Government. These VPNs provide a safe way for Tibetans to communicate.

Apple has also removed HKmap.live, an app that Hong Kong residents and journalists rely on to see where protests and police are so that they can stay safe.

We are demanding that Apple stop collaborating with this online censorship. We have joined worldwide protests at Apple offices and held online press conferences to tell journalists and the public about the risks posed by Apple's activities in China.

Several of the organisations that we are collaborating with, including International Tibet Network and consumer rights organisation SumOfUs, worked with us on recent successful campaigns. In 2018 we convinced Liverpool Football Club to scrap a controversial sponsorship deal with Chinese company Tibet Water Resources Ltd. A year later, Google abandoned plans to build a search engine for the Chinese market that would have complied with tight censorship and surveillance laws imposed by the Chinese government.

You can find out more about the work we have been doing to challenge Apple at: stopapplecensorship.online



Tibetans continue to push for flag emoji

Since last year, Free Tibet has been supporting efforts by Tibetans and Tibet supporters to have the Tibetan flag adopted as an emoji on phones and other digital devices worldwide.

Many countries are represented in the digital language of emoji but Tibet and Tibetans are not. Last year, we assisted with the submission of a detailed proposal to Unicode, the body that governs emojis, outlining why they should include the Tibetan flag. Unicode, which has been described as the world's emoji gatekeeper, works with companies like Apple, Google and Huawei to decide which emojis should be created and made available on devices.

We later heard that the proposal for the adoption of the emoji was among the strongest Unicode have ever seen. However, it considers country flags to be difficult and politically sensitive, so the organisation is allowing the tech companies it works with to decide whether or not they want to adopt it.

Tibetans online around the world have vociferously backed the campaign, with many sharing posts and photos on social media to promote the flag and ask why their country is not represented in emoji form.

The team at Free Tibet is applying pressure to make sure the companies listen to the voice of the Tibetan community and properly consider the proposal. Recent coverage of the campaign in tech magazines Wired and Techworld shows that there is interest. We will be escalating our support for the campaign in the coming year.



#Insert Tibetan Flag

Treats from the Free Tibet shop

Free Tibet is pleased to provide many hand crafted and ethical goods in the Free Tibet shop. We are proud to support ethical, Tibetan and, most recently, environmentally friendly suppliers.

Our organic shampoo bars come from Essential Spirit, an environmentally friendly company which was founded by two practising Buddhists. Their sumptuous products are vegan and eco-friendly and the shampoo bar offers a great alternative with no plastic packaging.

The new Newspaper Pencils are from Siesta, a fair trade supplier. The pencils are made from compressed recycled newspaper, a great sustainable alternative to reduce and reuse waste.

Both are available on our online shop at shop.freetibet.org where you can also read about more of our fantastic ethical suppliers.



Tibet is synonymous with its majestic natural environment. However, a brewing climate crisis in the mountains is putting the ecosystem at risk alongside the livelihoods of Tibetans.

The area comprising the Himalayas, Tibetan Plateau and Karakoram Mountains is known as the world's third pole because it holds the largest reserves of glacier ice on the planet outside of the North Pole and Antarctica. But this ice is shrinking, with devastating effects.

In 2016, two glaciers near Aru Co Lake in western Tibet collapsed within two months of each other, sending giant ice avalanches down the mountains. The first carried more than 65 million cubic metres of material, killing nine herders and hundreds of animals. One glacier collapse is considered rare but researchers said the slip of two neighbouring glaciers within two months has never been seen before.

Experts believe the event is a sign of how the global climate crisis has affected the region. Projected changes in climate could see some of the poorest Tibetans suffer severe water shortages and even lose their livelihoods. These shifts may hit Tibetans as hard as the human rights abuses that they face on a daily basis. It is also a bad omen for the global climate on which we all depend.

Scientists expect the mountains to warm by around 4.5 to 5 degrees by the end of the century. The temperatures are set to cause glacier ice to shrink or disappear, with around two thirds due to be lost by 2100. This will impact river flows, water supplies and ultimately people.

Those living in the region depend on glaciers to store ice in the winter which then melts into rivers in the spring and supplies farmers with water to plant their crops. Glacier retreat and warmer temperatures mean less ice is being stored over the winter, causing water shortages for farmers in the spring. These changes could make life impossible for some in the mountains and particularly the poorest, who rely on the immediate land and rivers to survive.

Mountain and frozen climate expert Joseph Shea told Free Tibet that the change in the water supplies could force people to start migrating away from the mountains. "If you don't have water, what are you going to do? You can't stay in those places anymore", he said.

"The warming may also thaw permafrost on the Tibetan Plateau, which will see the ground absorb more water and further reduce river flows in the already dry region. The thaw may cause the ground to shift which will damage houses, roads and rail lines. Tibetans will be affected", Shea added.

The Tibetan Plateau in meltdown

It is already happening: Komic is one of the highest altitude villages in the world, set in the state of Himachal Pradesh, where India borders Tibet. The community, which is mostly made up of farmers, has suffered severe droughts in recent years as glaciers have retreated.

A resident farmer, Nawang Tandup, told the India Times, "Water isn't an issue so long as we receive snowfall in peak winter. But that is not happening and our glaciers... are melting faster than before... We are now hoping for some divine intervention." He said he has been forced to leave half of his land barren thanks to the declining water supplies. There has reportedly been around a 30 per cent drop in crop yields of barley and green peas in the region Komic sits in over the last five years.

The Guardian reported in 2010 that desertification was also spreading across grassland on the Tibetan Plateau, which it said was being destroyed by rising temperatures, excess livestock and plagues of insects and rodents. The trend appears to be continuing.

While there may be some positives to the climate shift because winter temperatures will become less harsh in the mountains and may allow for a wider variety of crops to be grown in some areas, the water shortages

and desertification on the Tibetan Plateau will outweigh these benefits. And the consequences stretch further than the mountains because Tibet supplies around one billion people in Asia with drinking water every day.

Some of the warming may be a result of emissions from India, China and Tibet, but it is an international problem stemming from centuries of greenhouse gas emissions from around the world.

Free Tibet has been researching the effects of climate change on Tibet over the past few years and publishing articles highlighting the impact it is having on Tibetans. We are aiming to take this further with the launch of our climate change campaign 'Tibet Climate Crisis'. We are working jointly with Tibetans, including former nomads who have seen the landscape change with their own eyes, to challenge China's destructive environmental practices in Tibet and to raise awareness of the effects of climate change on Tibet's land and people.

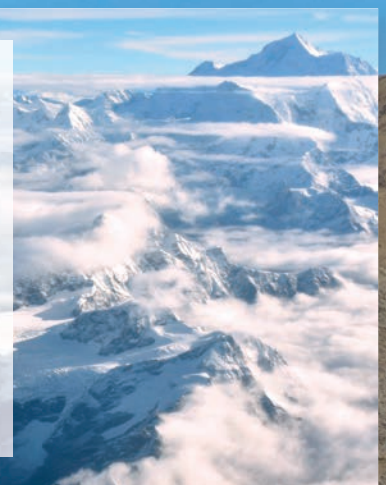
The campaign will culminate in November 2020 at the next UN climate change meeting, COP26, which will be held in Glasgow. Our aim is to try and ensure that a Tibetan can address the meeting and tell the world about the threat that Tibet is facing.

**“If you don't have water,
what are you going to do?
You can't stay in those
places anymore.”**

Can you help...?

In January 2020 Free Tibet launched an appeal on climate change in Tibet. Tibet is warming three times faster than the world's average rate and China's industrial activity in Tibet is exacerbating this. Yet Tibetans have no platform to voice their struggles.

Free Tibet's appeal will give a Tibetan representative the important chance to address the United Nations at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow later this year. Please support the appeal at www.freetibet.org/climatecrisis or use the donation form enclosed in this magazine.





Yarchen Gar: the siege continues

[More evictions and demolitions at Buddhist site.](#)

Depressing news continues to emerge from the Tibetan Buddhist community of Yarchen Gar, located in eastern Tibet.

We have reported the wave of housing demolitions and forced removals taking place at Yarchen Gar in previous issues of the magazine. Last September, we were able to verify that these demolitions and removals have been stepped up.

Information has been hard to obtain from inside Yarchen Gar. Journalists and independent travellers have to negotiate checkpoints and security cameras installed on the roads leading towards the site. Meanwhile, we have learned that residents are subjected to repeated checks of their mobile phones and surveillance by security personnel.

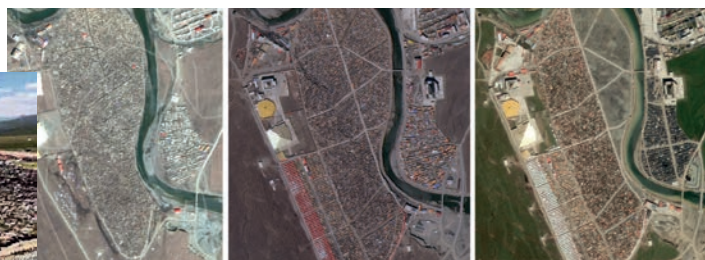
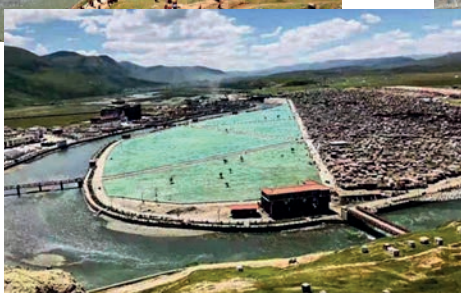
Nevertheless, Tibetan visitors to the community were able to confirm that more monks and nuns have been forced to leave. At the very minimum, 70 people have been

removed, although this number could actually be as high as 300. Those removed were forced to undergo the gruelling process of patriotic re-education, in which Tibetans are forced to swear loyalty to the People's Republic of China and sometimes denounce the Dalai Lama.

More bad news followed. Satellite images acquired by Free Tibet showed that the scale of the destruction last summer was on a far grander scale than in previous years. Just under half of the community on the west side of the river has been levelled.

Yarchen Gar was established in 1985 and until recently had a population of around 10,000 people. These numbers have shrunk in recent years after waves of forced removals and housing demolitions on the order of Chinese officials. Photo evidence, testimonies by visitors and analysis by Free Tibet all suggest that one of the key reasons for this has been to develop the site as a tourist attraction.

Free Tibet and our research partner Tibet Watch continue to monitor the situation in Yarchen Gar, despite huge challenges. We are working with governments and the United Nations to press China to halt this destruction.



Left: Yarchen Gar in 2013, and below in summer 2019 – almost half of the western bank has been levelled.
Above: Changes to Yarchen Gar over time following demolitions.

An interview with Sophie Richardson



Sophie Richardson has been the Director of Human Rights Watch's work on China for nearly a decade. Last year, we interviewed her about her work and the ongoing human rights abuses that Tibetans face under Chinese rule. This is a condensed version of the interview, in which Sophie talks about the challenges and urgency of working on Tibet. The interview has been edited for clarity:

Free Tibet: What is the focus of Human Rights Watch in China at the moment? Is it on Tibet and the Uyghur people?

Sophie Richardson: Those topics take up a fair amount of our time because, from our perspective, those are some of the communities that are subjected to some of the most acute or systemic violations. The particular hostility that appears to be reserved for Tibetans and Uyghurs by the central and regional authorities, I think makes those all the more urgent topics to research. We also spend a lot of time on them because it's harder to do good research on both those regions than other parts of the country.

Free Tibet: How does that research come out? Is that through speaking to sources?

SR: There used to be a small but reasonably predictable stream of people who would make it out of the country, and you could interview them about relatively recent development across the plateau. It's a very different ball game now because so few people come out. And we've watched the authorities really tighten the screws. The way we work on Tibet is now a little bit more like the way we work on North Korea – we have to wait and literally see what we can piece together. That said, Chinese and Tibetan language state media remains a remarkable repository for human rights violations, but they're often presented as public policy triumphs.

Free Tibet: Why do you think Tibet has become more difficult to report on? Is it a conscious effort by China?

SR: Yes, I think the authorities are trying very hard to, not just cut people off from information sources, but really to discourage certain kinds of research or enquiry, making the stakes higher for people inside Tibet. You know that there can be consequences for family members. I think those are often very powerful deterrents for people. They would be for anyone.

Free Tibet: What concerns you most about what's happening in Tibet at the moment?

SR: It probably is the extraordinary extent of the restrictions – even on very basic human communications. Because I think states don't do that unless they've got something to hide.

Free Tibet: Do you think the situation in those areas is getting worse over time?

SR: Not only do I think they're not getting better – they have deteriorated during a period in which the Chinese government has become more affluent, integrated into the world, voluntarily signed multiple human rights treaties. I think the trends aren't just negative inside those regions. I think they're indicative of a problem that China now poses globally as a threat to, not just the human rights of people inside China, but to the norms and the institutions that are meant to protect them.

Free Tibet: And do you think that's something that's spreading to other governments as well?

SR: China is probably doing the most arduous spade work. Does that have beneficial side effects for other authoritarian regimes? Hell yeah!

“The way we work on Tibet is now a little bit more like the way we work on North Korea.”

News update...

First self-immolation protest in nearly a year

A former monk, Yonten, carried out a self-immolation protest in eastern Tibet in November. He died of his injuries the same day. Yonten, 24, carried out his protest in Meruma, Ngaba County.

Yonten was previously a monk in nearby Kirti Monastery but later disrobed and settled as a nomad. Ngaba County has been the scene of numerous self-immolation protests since 2009, including the first two Tibetans to carry out such protests, Tabe in 2009 and Phuntsok in 2011, both of whom were monks at Kirti Monastery. There have been over 150 self-immolations across Tibet since 2009, the majority of them fatal.



Yonten.

Renowned Tibetan activist sentenced to prison

In November, anti-corruption and environmental activist A-Nya Sengdra was sentenced to seven years in prison. A court found him guilty of “gathering people to disturb public order” and “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.” Eight other Tibetans received similar sentences.

Court documents from last July claimed that A-Nya Sengdra had used WeChat groups, with titles including “anti-corruption”, “environmental protection” and “people’s petitions”, to carry out an assault on the region’s social and political order. He had previously served a year in prison for illegal possession of a firearm and was again arrested in 2018 for allegedly disturbing social order.

According to renowned Chinese human rights lawyer Lin Qilei, the authorities have said A-Nya’s case is related to the ongoing crackdown against “underworld forces” across China and Tibet. Human rights groups have criticised this policy for conflating a range of traditional and social activities, such as local efforts to preserve language and protect the environment, with criminal activity.

In November we received information that a Chinese official had asked Lin Qilei to fabricate a fraud claim against A-Nya. When Lin refused, authorities told him they were going to pursue a fraud charge against his client regardless. Lin has firmly asserted his belief that these charges are false and will continue fighting for A-Nya, who has appealed against this sentencing.



A-Nya Sengdra.

Religious restrictions imposed

Tibet has seen a further ratcheting up of restrictions on religious activity. The Chinese government has banned former government employees in the Tibet Autonomous Region from performing the *kora*, a traditional form of Tibetan worship that involves walking around sacred sites while chanting prayers and mantras. The Chinese authorities have ordered lists to be made of those who pursue this practice and threatened those listed with punishment.

The order was issued in August 2019 by the Tibet Autonomous Region Party Committee. It is one of a growing number of restrictions by the Communist Party on religious freedom in Tibet.



Sign outside Shalu Temple in Shigatse prohibiting entry to CCP members and those under 18.

Monks forced to perform

Last summer, hundreds of Tibetan monks at Galden Jampaling Monastery in Chamdo, central Tibet, were instructed to perform a colourful choreographed ceremony to mark the 70-year anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. A video of the performance was released by official Chinese media in September, showing thousands of monks waving Chinese flags and singing: "Me and my Motherland, unable to be separated for a moment; long live the Motherland".

The monks were told by the Chinese authorities to "bravely stand up and expose the 14th Dalai Lama's reactionary thoughts". They were also instructed to show gratitude, patriotism, conformity and obedience towards the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Security checks, surveillance and search operations across Tibet were stepped up in preparation for public activities celebrating the anniversary. Six Tibetans were detained after refusing to take part in official events, and defying instructions to wave Chinese flags, sing patriotic songs and praise the CCP. The families of these six have subsequently tried to hand over food and blankets to them but local authorities have refused to allow this and threatened to extend the detentions.



Monks gathered in formation outside Galden Jampaling Monastery in Chamdo.

Further arrests across Tibet

Six Tibetans were arrested in November in the village of Dza Wonpo in Kardze, eastern Tibet. On 7 November, Kusal, 20, and Tamey, Tsultrim and Soeta, all aged 18, were arrested after scattering leaflets with pro-independence messages. Their religious teacher, Shergyam, was also detained but was later released.

Later that month, two other locals, Lhagyal and Yonten, were arrested after they carried out protests at the village police station. The pair shouted slogans for Tibetan independence and threw leaflets into the air calling for an end to China's rule in Tibet. Materials posted online prior to their protest expressed their solidarity with the four Tibetans arrested earlier that month, who they referred to as "those bravehearts who are fighting for the cause of Tibet's independence".

The protests followed a series of CCP propaganda campaigns in the area. Local Tibetans were encouraged to pledge allegiance to the CCP and defend China's human rights record. Interviews with these Tibetans were recorded for use in state media broadcasts. With people simultaneously subjected to coercive policies, including replacing images of the Dalai Lama with those of CCP leaders, divisions were generated among Tibetan communities between those resistant to the propaganda and those acquiescing out of fear.



Lhagyal (left) and Yonten (right).

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, 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!



Please find enclosed a cheque for £20 towards your campaign to help free Tibetans from repressive surveillance. I know it is just a drop in the ocean, but please could some of it go towards stopping China selecting the next Dalai Lama.

Best Wishes
B, West Sussex

Thank you so much for your donation. Whatever the amount, all financial support is hugely appreciated – in fact, most of our funding comes from smaller donations just like this one.

Most of the income we receive is defined as ‘unrestricted’. This means that we’re able to use it wherever the need is greatest. As our Beyond Belief campaign – aimed at stopping Chinese interference with the Dalai Lama’s succession – is a current priority, your donation will certainly go towards supporting this.

Hi, I am a pro-democracy Hong Kong American who lives in NYC. Me and a group of friends are thinking of hosting a pro-democracy rally, grouping Hong Kong, Tibet, Taiwan, Indonesia, South Korea, etc... Do you guys have members in NYC interested in grouping together?

Sandy, New York

Hi Sandy,
Free Tibet is a UK-based organisation but we have friends around the world, including the United States. We recommend getting in touch with Students for a Free Tibet.

Free Tibet is lucky to have incredible supporters from all over the world. They’re as diverse as the places they come from, but they all share one thing in common – the desire to see Tibetans able to determine their own future. In this edition we highlight some of the amazing people who stand in solidarity with the cause.



Swansea students show support

We received this photo of geography students from Swansea University wearing Free Tibet t-shirts after visiting Sikkim, near the border of Tibet, on a field trip in October. During the trip, they learnt about the Chinese occupation of Tibet and the human rights abuses taking place there. They have continued to show their support for the cause after returning to the UK.

MATT MING



Supporter Spotlight

Daring Lhasa protest goes viral

Felipe Beleza is a Free Tibet supporter who has visited 59 countries. He says Tibet is his “number one”. At the risk of imprisonment, he carried out this simple protest outside the Potala Palace in Lhasa.

Felipe shared this photo on social media this year and it soon went viral. He travelled to Tibet in 2014 and plans on visiting the country again later this year.

Tibetans who protest against the Chinese occupation face lengthy prison sentences. Even flying the Tibetan flag or keeping a picture of the Dalai Lama in their homes is a punishable offence.



Clockwise from left: Swansea students in their Free Tibet t-shirts; Felipe Beleza in Lhasa; Vigil at the Chinese embassy.

Standing together for human rights

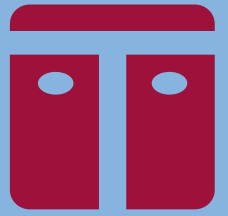
Free Tibet staff and supporters attended a vigil outside the Chinese Embassy in London on 10 December, Human Rights Day. Tibetans, Uyghurs and Hongkongers made speeches while others stood in solidarity against the human rights abuses carried out by China. Thank you to everyone who came out to support us!

Free Tibet are delighted to welcome our new Mi Tse (life long) supporters: Eve Lloyd and Wendy Driver.

Find out more about becoming a *Mi Tse* supporter at secure.freetibet.org/join-for-life



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