

FREE TIBET



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• Thermo Fisher action • Tibetan youth • Lhundrub Drakpa •

CEO LETTER



Dear friends,

This is the first magazine since our CEO Sam Walton announced his farewell. Adjusting to such a big departure is never easy, and yet, as we make the finishing touches to this magazine, I can say that I have never been prouder of this organisation or more excited about its work.

In this magazine alone, you can read about how our Advocacy Officer is driving the growing support for Tibet in the UK parliament, and about our Senior Researcher making a powerful intervention in a Canadian parliamentary hearing on Tibet.

The fact that Canada is holding such a hearing is a sign of the times. Tibet is once again getting the attention it deserves. There were big articles this summer about Tibet in the Economist, Guardian, Telegraph and the Times. Meanwhile the United Nations and German government have demanded that China shut down its colonial boarding schools system. We are working on ensuring that the UK follows suit.

We also keep grinding out campaign wins. Thanks to your support, our small but determined team of staff has been able to convince more companies to cut ties with CCP-backed surveillance giant Hikvision and bring China's plans for a CCP "super embassy" to a shuddering halt. Our cover story is about a massive day of protest in Boston that our Digital Officer, Rabga, was able to co-organise thanks to the hundreds of Free Tibet supporters who fund our campaign work.

It cannot be said enough: your support keeps us going, supports our campaigns and helps us get these campaign wins. These victories belong to all of us.

Thank you,

John Jones, Head of Campaigns, Policy and Advocacy

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Front cover: Tenzin Rabga from Free Tibet leads a rally against Thermo Fisher in Boston. Credit: Free Tibet.

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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.



Young people and their artworks created at the workshop.

THE NEW GENERATION

Free Tibet's support for Tibetan youth.

In July, we had the pleasure of carrying out a media training and advocacy workshop at YTEC's (Young Tibetan Educational Club) teen weekend camp. Founded by Dr Tenzin Takla in 2006, the camp's main goal was to preserve and educate young Tibetans on their heritage, language and culture while incorporating fun campsite activities throughout the week.

Tenzin Tsepa Samphel, an incredibly bright youth leader, was one of a group of young interns who organised the weekend's activities. They are among the growing number of young Tibetans in the UK who are speaking out for their country and its struggle for freedom. Free Tibet's job was to help give them the skills and the confidence to take this message to different audiences.

Free Tibet's Advocacy Officer, Tenzin Kunga, Digital Officer, Tenzin Rabga, and Head of Campaigns, John Jones, took on the job. Between them they have a wealth of experience speaking to the public, media, politicians and online audiences. Before us were around 20 young Tibetans, many of them secondary school students.

We began by delving into how we communicate about Tibet and how to craft compelling stories to reach people who know little to nothing about Tibet. We also discussed how to handle difficult questions and keep a cool head in the face of provocative comments by putting the focus back on the

important points: the occupation and human rights abuses that Tibetans face. The young Tibetans each had a chance to practice these techniques and work on their public speaking.

We also discussed how to grab the attention of journalists, a constant challenge when it comes to Tibet. We invited each participant to present an interesting fact about Tibet to the room. The students became teachers, with several of their facts teaching us something new.

The Tibetan participants found our campaigns especially interesting, particularly the pressing issue of China's colonial boarding schools. As students themselves, they empathised deeply with the plight of children separated from their families and communities in Tibet. In YTEC, where Tibetan language, culture and heritage are encouraged and celebrated, we all reflected on what it would be like if we were forced to absorb the teachings of a government that is trying to erode everything that makes Tibetans unique.

The workshop was a resounding success, with several students coming up to us after to give thanks. We hope we have done our bit to help and look forward to further collaboration with YTEC and the Tibetan Community in Britain. The young people we worked with will further the Tibetan cause and Free Tibet is committed to backing them every step of the way.

FREE HIS VOICE

A still from Lhundrub Drakpa's music video.



Free Tibet is campaigning for the release of jailed musician Lhundrub Drakpa.



**Upon the heads of a sincere and truthful people,
A black hat has been forcefully placed.**

These words open the song *Black Hat*, released in March 2019 by Tibetan musician Lhundrub Drakpa, who puts his protests to music.

In the song, he evocatively sings about how Tibetans have “suffered as if hell is on earth”, how they are “gagged” and their language is “hemmed in by a thousand insidious means”, and of the “sorrow of the people of the Land of Snow”.

The song struck a chord with the Tibetan people, putting the misery of life under occupation into song. But the Chinese government does not take criticism lightly and it was only a matter of time before it tried to silence the music, and Lhundrub Drakpa himself.

The title of his song refers to a Tibetan proverb: “Don’t put a black hat on an innocent person” – don’t condemn a person with false accusations. Two months after *Black Hat* was released, Lhundrub Drakpa was arrested, without having committed any crime.

He was held for over a year in detention and beaten before being sentenced to six

years in prison. He has not been heard from since, making him yet another one of Tibet’s disappeared political prisoners.

We will not let Lhundrub Drakpa’s case or his music fall silent. In August, we launched a new online campaign to demand his release, starting with an online action targeting local authorities in central Tibet. This was quickly followed by a vocal demonstration at the Chinese embassy on 30 August, the Day of the Disappeared. With Chinese officials only metres away, we shouted for Lhundrub Drakpa’s release and played the song that they wanted to suppress. Tibetans also held up placards with the full lyrics of *Black Hat*, catching the attention of passers-by.

At the demonstration, we encouraged members of the crowd who use social media to share Lhundrub Drakpa’s song far and wide and to send the video to their favourite music artists so that it can reach more people. If just one or two bands retweet the video, Lhundrub Drakpa’s case could reach tens or hundreds of thousands of new people.

BLACK HAT

by Lhundrub Drakpa

*Upon the heads of a sincere and truthful people
A black hat has been forcefully placed
For years and months under this black hat
They've suffered as if hell is on earth
A language that is more precious than jewels
Is hemmed in by a thousand insidious means
For years and months in this state
The voice of the six million Tibetans is gagged
For years and months the sun is clouded
For days and nights the moon is blackened
In this realm of strangled darkness
Lies the sorrow of the people of the Land of Snow*

Translated by High Peaks Pure Earth
(highpeakspureearth.com) with further amendments

Demonstrators in black hats share the lyrics of Lhundrub Drakpa's song



We will continue to demand Lhundrub Drakpa's release, but we want to include our readers in the campaign, too. For this reason, we've included a postcard to the Chinese embassy in this magazine. If you fill it out and send it back to us, we will ensure that it gets there and makes an impact. In 2021, we were able to flood the Chinese embassy with messages about detained teacher Rinchen Kyi, who was released in April 2022. Free Tibet hopes to do the same for Lhundrub Drakpa.

We're also engaging with our allies in parliament and the Tibet movement. Friend of Tibet and former head of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, Benedict Rogers, managed to get Lhundrub Drakpa's case mentioned in an article he wrote for the Daily Telegraph. This is already a campaign with huge support and we hope it can keep growing. Follow its progress on our website here: freetibet.org/lhundrub-drakpa.

YOU DID IT ONCE, AND YOU CAN DO IT AGAIN

Do you remember our campaign for the release of Rinchen Kyi? She suffered 8 months of gruelling detention – for the 'crime' of teaching her native language.

Your support for Rinchen Kyi was monumental. Thousands of Free Tibet supporters sent postcards with her face to the Chinese embassy in London. In April 2022, we got the news that she had returned home. Strength in numbers works.

Now it's time to stand with Lhundrub Drakpa.

£5 supports crucial advocacy initiatives and parliamentary lobbyings.

£20 will fund a major demonstration to bring "Black Hat" to a global audience.

£50 supports vital research and monitoring works.

This campaign could bring an end to Lhundrub Drakpa's wrongful imprisonment. You can donate online at freetibet.org/missing



CAMPAIGNS UPDATE

HIKVISION

In our last magazine, we shared the good news that Chinese surveillance giant Hikvision was continuing to be squeezed out of the UK.

The CCTV manufacturer, which has been found to be involved in interrogations and mass surveillance against Tibetans and in Uyghur camps, had already been dropped by several councils and Tesco supermarkets. We are happy to report another development: in June, both Iceland and Morrisons committed to phasing out the company's security cameras in all of their supermarkets. This campaign win was the result of a letter campaign, appealing to the company directors of both supermarkets, where Free Tibet collaborated with a coalition of community and human rights groups.

Meanwhile, in parliament, a key government bill that will regulate public procurement has been debated, with Free Tibet working closely with a number of sympathetic MPs to ensure the bill includes a clause banning security companies such as Hikvision from the public sphere in the UK. This would include local councils, government ministries, schools and



Security cameras outside parliament

hospitals. Research by Free Tibet in 2022 found that at least 275 UK councils, in every part of the country, were using CCTV cameras manufactured by Hikvision.

The rebel MPs applied pressure, and it paid off; just before parliament went into recess for the summer, the government announced that they were banning companies subject to the Security Law of the People's Republic of China from what it calls "sensitive sites". When parliament resumes in September, these MPs and cabinet ministers are expected to meet to ensure that "sensitive sites" will have as wide a definition as possible. It remains our hope that Free Tibet's campaigning results in a full ban on Hikvision in the UK.

TIBET WATCH ADDRESSES THE CANADIAN PARLIAMENT

In April, Tibet Watch's Senior Researcher was invited to testify at a hearing by the Canadian Parliament on China's colonial boarding school system in Tibet

In her presentation, Tenzin Choekyi shared the testimony from a 15-year-old Tibetan refugee who escaped to Dharamsala earlier this year. The testimony revealed harrowing details of life in a colonial boarding school, including an intensive school day that begins at four or five in the morning, playgrounds "under the close watch of surveillance cameras", and very few opportunities to see family. The refugee said that Tibetan language classes are optional, and Tibetan exam marks do not count in children's final exam grade.

Choekyi also took the opportunity to highlight wider government policies to eradicate the Tibetan language from schools and public life, a "cultural erasure strategy" that Tibetans see as an existential threat to their country.

The colonial boarding school system has seen an estimated 950,000 Tibetan children between the ages of four and 18 placed in residential schools and pre-schools. Students have severely limited access

to their families, immersed in a highly prescriptive environment that promotes the Chinese language and Chinese Communist Party-approved history over Tibetans' own language and history. The policy has been criticised by the United Nations Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, which in March 2023 urged China to close down the residential school system.

Tibet Watch's presence at the Canadian Parliament hearing represents a major shift in international awareness of the colonial boarding school system.



Tenzin Choekyi addressing the Canadian parliamentary hearing

ADVOCACY UPDATE

PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR TIBET GETS BACK ON TRACK

This has been another busy period of parliamentary activity, with the Annual General Meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet (APPGT) taking place in June. As secretariat for the APPGT, Free Tibet helped run the meeting, which was attended by seven MPs.

Such a strong turnout, as well as willingness by the members to continue on their role in the group, reflects a strong commitment on their part to strengthen the parliamentary support for Tibet, which bodes well for the Tibetan cause.

Having reelected its members for another year, the APPGT got down to business. Top of the agenda was China's colonial boarding school system in Tibet and the reaction by the UN Committee of Economic Cultural and Social rights, which in March called for the programme to be shut down. The

group discussed ways to collaborate with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Human Rights for a parliamentary hearing focussed on this subject. Free Tibet has been pushing for a hearing or a debate in parliament on the boarding school system, either of which would generate

significant attention for Tibet. We hope to have more details in the next magazine.

On behalf of the Secretariat, Free Tibet's Advocacy Officer, Tenzin Kunga, offered white Khatas, Tibetan silk scarves, to each of the elected members present as a traditional Tibetan greeting.

Meanwhile on the parliamentary advocacy outreach work, Tenzin Kunga and Free Tibet's Head of Campaigns, Policy and Research, John Jones, met Sarah Champion (Labour MP for Rotherham and Chair of the International Development Select Committee) in July at her parliamentary office. The pair briefed her about the China-Tibet conflict in general and more specifically on the colonial boarding school system.

Sarah was one of the several parliamentarians who met Tibetan scholar Dr Gyal Lo at the parliamentary reception hosted in his honour in March 2023, which you might remember from the previous magazine. The reception played a key role in attracting the attention of MPs like Sarah Champion, who admitted that she was new to the Tibetan cause. It also led to action, with three MPs from across the political spectrum contacting the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to ask about the government's response to the colonial boarding school system. Parliament is

a key part of our plan to challenge this destructive policy and we hope support for Tibet continues to grow now that the APPGT is once again up and running.



Above: Sarah Champion MP with Tenzin Kunga.
Below: Members of the APPGT with khatas.





TAKING ON THERMO FISHER

Tenzin Rabga reflects on a huge day of action in Boston.

A few months ago, your incredible support took me to the headquarters of US corporate giant Thermo Fisher in Boston.

As a Tibetan, the reason for me travelling to Boston was personal: last year it was revealed that Thermo Fisher DNA testing kits have been bought up in huge quantities by police in occupied Tibet. These same police have been carrying out a giant, intrusive, ethnically-

targeted testing campaign, in which as many as 1.2 million Tibetans have been forced to submit DNA samples – a huge invasion of their privacy and another tool of control by the occupation. Those sampled included children as young as five years old.

The timing was also crucial: 24 May was the day of Thermo Fisher’s annual general meeting. Behind the scenes we had been working with shareholders to press the company to block sales to Tibet, but we also wanted to show the company how Tibetans felt about their complicity with the occupation.

With generous backin from Free Tibet supporters, I played a key role in orchestrating protests at the company’s headquarters and around the city. Our aim was to reach as many staff, shareholders, journalists and members of the public as possible and let them know exactly what this company is up to right in the heart of their city.



Top: Our demonstration outside Thermo Fisher HQ. Left: The ad van tours the streets of Boston.

One person who has already heard this message is Thermo Fisher CEO Marc Casper. Free Tibet has reached out multiple times to request a meeting with him. He has dodged all of our requests and refused to halt sales, but at the Thermo Fisher office there was nowhere to hide.

We started by sending an ad van through the streets of Boston, similar to one that was so effective in London earlier this year. Our digi-van carried our campaign message across the city from Chinatown and Fenway Park to Harvard Square and finally the Thermo Fisher main office. This led perfectly to our next move: a dramatic stunt right on Thermo Fisher's lawn, illustrating Marc Casper's complicity in the Chinese government's DNA harvesting. Attempts to get a meeting in person were blocked by security but thanks to the stunt, our work had already been done, with all eyes from the Thermo Fisher office on us.

Staff might have thought that was it, but later in the evening, things got even bigger with a huge rally outside of the Thermo Fisher building with the Boston Tibetan community. I had the opportunity to make a speech, energising the crowd with news of a campaign that continues to gain momentum.

Our voices were heard; at least two shareholders, one of whom we are proud to call a Free Tibet supporter, used their platform to raise concerns and ask when Thermo Fisher will block the supply of its equipment to police in Tibet. Other shareholders have since been in touch, forcing the company to issue a response to them.

You, Free Tibet supporters, all played your part in making this happen: from over 70,000 of you signing our petition to those of you who shared our photos, videos and infographics, and those who generously donated to fund our actions. We could not have overshadowed Thermo Fisher's AGM without you. Together we will intensify the pressure and push Thermo Fisher to block the sale of their DNA equipment to police in occupied Tibet.

You can follow the campaign online here: freetibet.org/hands-off-tibetans-dna and there will no doubt be further updates in the next magazine.

“ We wanted to show the company how Tibetans felt about their complicity with the occupation. ”

FREE TIBET IS A SMALL ORGANISATION MAKING A BIG IMPACT

All the campaigns you're reading about today, including Hands Off Tibetans' DNA, depend on regular donations.

When you set up a monthly gift to Free Tibet, your money will go further. You make us better able to plan ahead and create long-lasting, powerful campaigns. And it means we can be reactive and impactful right when we need to be.

Regular Givers support ongoing research into forced DNA collections. Can you become a Regular Giver today?

If you've signed up already – we see you. Your contributions are relentless blows against the Chinese Communist Party and the injustices of occupation.

The average monthly gift to Free Tibet is £7. Can you match it?

Please visit freetibet.org or return the enclosed form in the freepost envelope.





China’s “super embassy” plan has been brought to a standstill.

In a major development, the Chinese government has abandoned its plans for a “super embassy” in east London.

The plan, which had already been resisted by residents of the London borough of Tower Hamlets (including Tibetans), was effectively scrapped in mid-August, after the Chinese government allowed the deadline for an appeal to expire.

The Chinese government bought the prospective site in 2018, purchasing the former Royal Mint building for £255m. The 200-year-old Grade II listed building was used to make Britain’s coins until 1975. With 65,000 square metres of space, is ten times the size of China’s existing embassy in central London.

The purchase prompted Free Tibet and other campaign groups to work with members of Tower Hamlets council with a project to rename the surrounding streets “Tibet Hill”, “Tiananmen Square”, “Uyghur Court” and “Hong Kong Road”. The plan to rename streets gained momentum when over 2,000 Free Tibet supporters sent letters to the local mayor and councillors, ensuring that it was debated and ultimately approved in 2021.

Plans for the “super embassy” were unfolding at a tense time, and there was a dramatic turn of events in October 2022, when a demonstration by pro-democracy activists outside the Chinese consulate in Manchester was interrupted by a group of men who emerged from the building and attacked a protester, dragging him inside the gates of the consulate and physically assaulting him.

Two months later, Tower Hamlets Council’s Strategic Development Committee met to carry out what would otherwise have been a formality: approving the Chinese government’s embassy plan. Instead, locals inundated them with objections that the embassy could result in a repeat of the Manchester incident. Free Tibet staff joined the committee meeting to speak to journalists and councillors. We also heard how protests by groups such as Free Tibet were also a concern, with councillors noting that demonstrations at the existing embassy often numbered hundreds of people.

The Free Tibet team could not believe it when, after hours of evidence, questions, and deliberation, the council not only refused to give approval to the embassy project, but voted unanimously to block the move.

The Chinese government were left hoping that Mayor of London Sadiq Khan or Housing Secretary Michael Gove would step in to reverse the decision. Neither did, and the Chinese government let the period in which they could issue a challenge lapse.

There have been sharp words of criticism from China to the British government over the failed plan, but clearly money cannot buy everything. Our dedicated team of campaigners and growing numbers of supporters will return to our usual site at 49-51 Portland Place, London for future protests, where shouts of a free Tibet will continue to be heard by those inside for as long as it takes.

Local councillors Peter Golds and Rabina Khan, flanked by Tibetans and Tibet supporters at Royal Mint Court in 2021





GRAFFITI WAR

A battle of ideas plays out in east London.

In early August, east London was the scene for a battle of ideas, with Tibet being dragged into the action. It showed how, even far away from occupied Tibet, Tibetans often find themselves coming face to face with the Chinese Communist Party.

It started when a group of Chinese students, under the cover of night, spray painted slogans associated with the CCP in bold red Chinese script on a wall in London's famous Brick Lane. Located in Tower Hamlets, Brick Lane is barely a 30-minute walk from Royal Mint Court, where the battle over China's proposed new embassy had been raging.

Whatever the original motivation, the act caused outrage for two main reasons. Firstly, existing artwork was whitewashed, lost forever, to make way for these slogans, including a tribute to the recently departed singer Tina Turner. Secondly, the slogans were reminiscent of the ubiquitous CCP propaganda blasted on buildings, streets and even hills across occupied Tibet. Local artists and residents, including Chinese dissidents, Hongkongers, Uyghurs and Tibetans. The response spiralled into an all-out graffiti war.

The propaganda slogans were soon covered with calls for real democracy and for freedom, along with demands for a "Free Taiwan", "Free Tibet", "Free Uyghurs" and references to Hong Kong, the Tiananmen Square Massacre and the lack of freedom in China.

Not to miss out on telling Tibet's story, activists from Free Tibet, International Tibet Network and Tibet Action Institute and the Tibetan Community in Britain grabbed this opportunity with both hands, sticking posters on the Brick Lane wall about the Chinese-style colonial boarding schools in Tibet, China's stealing of Tibetans' DNA, and spray painting in big bold letters "Free Tibet" and "Tibet Will Be Free".

Local residents, tourists and curious onlookers flocked to see the wall, with numerous photos of the anti-CCP slogans later finding their way onto social media.

Interest in this contest between supporters and opponents of the CCP began to grow, picked up on social media, quickly followed by mainstream media, with CNN reporters even interviewing Free Tibet staff.

This was no longer a wall of CCP propaganda, but an opportunity for hundreds of passers-by on this busy street to hear Tibetan voices and learn about the occupation. As Tenzin Kunga our Advocacy Officer, stated: "We will never allow the Chinese Communist Party to easily disseminate their vile propaganda in our free society here and we will resist it using our right to free expression, a basic right which has been wrongfully denied to my fellow compatriots inside Tibet."

SPOTLIGHT ON...

SUPPLIER – DOLLS 4 TIBET

How a workshop became a symbol of hope and cross-cultural understanding

Nestled beside the mountain road between Dharamsala and McLeod Ganj, a quaint workshop holds an inspiring story of cross-cultural collaboration and empowerment, unfolding for over a decade. Dolls4Tibet, born as a heartfelt endeavour, has evolved into a thriving haven for Tibetan and Indian women, nurturing camaraderie while crafting exquisite dolls. Our Shop Officer, George, recently explored this unique space.

Established in 2007 by the visionary German, Mona Bruchmann, Dolls4Tibet initially aimed to create dolls mirroring Tibetan children. Mona's ambition grew as these dolls gained popularity and piqued the interest of others. A single doll birthed a potent platform, bridging communities and promoting cultural integration.

In its early days, Dolls4Tibet relied predominantly on skilled Tibetan refugees, who meticulously crafted each doll with care. These women received rigorous training to meet the highest standards. Nomadic women, already proficient in wool processing, embraced this craft. Their expertise, coupled with the team's dedication, transformed the dolls into more than playthings—they became expressions of tradition and art.

As the workshop flourished, Dolls4Tibet embarked on a remarkable journey towards inclusivity. Indian women joined over time, turning the workshop into a melting pot of cultures, experiences and stories. This transition faced challenges, including prejudices and cultural barriers. Nevertheless, determination and perseverance fostered a diverse, family-like workforce, showcasing the beauty of unity in diversity.

Beyond its artistic achievements, Dolls4Tibet played a unique role in facilitating the integration of Tibetan refugees. The workshop's safe and supportive environment enabled these women to rebuild their lives and find purpose through their craft. As Mona herself told me: "Much of the workforce comes from challenging backgrounds. Dolls4Tibet has become more than just a workplace; it has become a sanctuary." One woman added: "We earn money, see children play with our dolls,



Momo Tsering at work; some of the workshop's latest dolls.



receive support when sick, and create artwork. It's a privilege, and I'm proud."

Central to Dolls4Tibet's success is its commitment to giving back. Charitable donations allow the workshop to create dolls for Tibetan Children's Village, passing on the spirit of unity and compassion to the next generation.

Dolls4Tibet's heartwarming success showcases the power of art and culture to break down barriers and foster connections. Starting as a simple idea aimed at Tibetan children, it has blossomed into a symbol of hope, resilience, and cross-cultural understanding. As the workshop continues to provide employment and empowerment to Tibetan refugees and Indian women, Dolls4Tibet stands as an example of how creativity and community can shape a brighter, more inclusive future.

SUPPORTERS

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, by phone on +44 (0)330 016 8404 or by post to: Letters, Free Tibet, ER82, The Link, Effra Road, SW2 1BZ, UK. Please note we cannot guarantee publication of each letter we receive. Thank you!

Your updates and replies to our campaigns are incredibly important to us here at Free Tibet. They are insightful, critical and engaging in their response to our work. Several supporters have been in touch telling us about their connection to Tibet, and the work they are doing personally to further the cause. We wanted to highlight this amazing grassroots work in this issue by sharing their work

Cecilia Darboe – Stockholm Christmas Market

It may be autumn, but some of us are already looking forward to Christmas. Cecilia, a member of the Swedish Tibet Committee, orders dolls from our shop every year to sell at her local Christmas Market in Stockholm. There, she works with the local community to raise funds for the Tibetan cause. As well as being one of the largest Christmas Markets in Stockholm, it is also a perfect opportunity for her to talk to new people about Tibet, Tibetan culture and the occupation.

This sort of grassroots activity is key in reaching out to potential supporters by engaging them with the issues first hand. If this inspires you to run something similar this year at your local Christmas fete, get in contact with us at shop@freetibet.org.

Keep up the good work, Cecilia!



Celia – A Personal Touch

There are many items in the Free Tibet shop which can give you a unique and stand-out fashion, while directly supporting our campaigns work. This supporter decided that they wanted to make their message of support as clear as possible by dyeing their bum-bag so it stood out more and adding our logo to the front.

This sort of crafty alteration has made this item unique, and an excellent conversation starter to get people talking about Tibet. Wearing the Free Tibet logo in any way is a great way to start a conversation and spread the word, and Celia's handiwork has helped her go above and beyond in this instance!

This action also highlights that it is many people doing small things that lead to a big difference. This action and others like it keep the momentum rising, and as His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama says, "Just as ripples spread out when a single pebble is dropped into water, the actions of individuals can have far-reaching effects."



David Hoggett – Letter in the Hampshire Chronicle

David, a supporter from Hampshire, wrote to his local newspaper to talk about the power of protesting with your purchases. He shared his letter with us:

"BOYCOTT CHINA

How refreshing to read Tony Gaster's letter (Buy British) damning the disgraceful sourcing policy of Hampshire County Council in buying Chinese-made solar power equipment (Chronicle, Letters, November 17).

Our family boycotts China-made products because of their appalling human rights and environmental records so it was great to see there are other consumers with a conscience!

While on such topics I would like to praise our local Winchester Council with the confirmation that they have no Hikvision CCTV cameras in operation. This is the terrible Chinese company that spies on innocent Uyghurs and Tibetans, in the respective occupied countries, with their all-pervading camera systems.

Artificial intelligence racial profiling flags if people from these groups are 'up to no good' and they can expect to then be carted off to the prisons that are estimated to hold over a million of them for a dose of 're-education'.

More information on such despicable practices can be obtained from the wonderful Free Tibet organisation (freetibet.org).

Any level of publicity for our cause is greatly appreciated and David's letter shows how you can make a difference in your local community every single day by engaging with the issues of Tibet in public forums and making sure the Tibetan people are not forgotten.

NEWS FROM TIBET



China works hard to keep news of their abuses in Tibet hidden. Thanks to the crucial work by our research partner Tibet Watch, we are able to shine a light on what is really happening in Tibet.



MONK AND SISTER RELEASED AFTER TWO YEARS IN PRISON

Geshe Sonam Gyatso and his sister Tsering Lhamo have been released after serving two years in prison. The pair were arrested in early 2021.

Geshe Sonam Gyatso's arrest was in connection with a small sum of money he sent to the India-based office of the Dalai Lama and Kirti Rinpoche, the exiled abbot of Kirti Monastery. The money was a small religious offering in a gesture known as a "prayer for a deceased soul". Geshe Sonam Gyatso himself was a former abbot at Kirti Monastery. He spent over a year in pre-trial detention before receiving his two-year sentence.

The circumstances of Tsering Lhamo's arrest and detention are less clear, although it is known that she also spent a year in interrogative detention before her sentence. Both Tsering Lhamo and her sister, who works in a Ngawa County bank, were dismissed from their jobs following her arrest.

Tsering Lhamo was released in early April and Geshe Sonam Gyatso in late May. Both are reported to be in poor health due to their treatment in prison, which included severe beatings.

FOUR TIBETAN STUDENTS ARRESTED DURING ESCAPE TO INDIA

Tibet Watch has learned that four Tibetan students were arrested in March while attempting to flee to India. A further four students are missing. The eight students were residents of Second Middle School in Chuchen County and were stopped when police uncovered their plans.

An anonymous source told Free Tibet's research partner, Tibet Watch, that those who were arrested were interrogated and assaulted while in detention. Furthermore, each student was fined 20,000 yuan (roughly £2,175). They added that police contacted the parents of the four missing students to inform them that their children crossed the border and are supposedly in the hands of "criminal or blacklisted organisations". Parents were told that it might be possible to retrieve their children, but only if they are willing to pay 80,000 yuan per person (roughly £8,700).





BUDDHIST TEACHING SHUT DOWN IN EASTERN TIBET

On 18th July, local authorities in Mongra County in eastern Tibet broke up a government-approved religious gathering, detaining its organisers, dispersing worshippers, and prematurely destroying a sand mandala that had been created for the ceremony.

Police arrived at the ceremony in the morning as the Seventh Athi Kalsang Tashi Gyatso was preparing to deliver a teaching on the Kalachakra, or Wheel of Time, ceremony.

The police intervention was surprising; preparations for the teachings had only been completed after approval had been granted by the Qinghai provincial government. Tens of thousands of devotees had congregated on the Kalachakra grounds for the event, which was to last up to 23 July.

Instead, police threw water to destroy the sand mandala and tore down pilgrims' tents. Attendees, who included farmers and nomads who had travelled long distances to attend, were reportedly left in tears.

WRITER LOBSANG LHUNDUP RELEASED

Tibetan writer Lobsang Lhundup was released in August after completing a four-year prison sentence for "disrupting social order". Sources close to Lhundup suspect that his arrest was linked to his involvement in teaching Tibetan history at a private cultural education centre in Chengdu. Lobsang Lhundup was held incommunicado for two years before being sentenced in a closed trial in 2021.

Following initial instruction as a monk, Lobsang Lhundup became a writer and public intellectual, publishing a number of books and articles under the pen name Dhi Laden. Following the 2008 protests in occupied Tibet, he wrote a book entitled *The Art of Passive Resistance*, which criticised Chinese Communist Party rule. The book was reportedly used as evidence in his trial. It was translated into English by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in 2015.

Tibetan media have reported that Lobsang Lhundrub was placed under heavy surveillance following his release.



PROTESTER CONTINUES TO DEMAND BROTHER'S RELEASE

Throughout spring and summer 2023, Gonmo Kyi has carried out a series of protests and released online videos demanding the release of her brother, imprisoned Tibetan businessman Dorje Tashi. Dorje Tashi was arrested in July 2008 and sentenced to life imprisonment for "loan fraud", a charge he and his family contest. Tibet Watch has received reports that Dorje Tashi was tortured whilst in detention.

In one of her videos, received by Tibet Watch on 2 August, Gonmo Kyi revealed bruises on both her arms, which she states are the result of four or five police personnel dragging her and beating her at the front gate of Drapchi Prison in Lhasa where her brother is imprisoned. Gonmo Kyi urged local authorities to allow her to see her brother, a promise she says was made in July but never fulfilled. Other protests outside the prison have seen Gonmo Kyi screened from public view by police, who surrounded her with a large piece of black material that appeared to be a police banner.

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