

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	350
Land:	Kina
Kilde:	United States Department of State
Titel:	Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2013 - China - Tibet
Udgivet:	27. februar 2014
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	2. juli 2014

[EN](#) | [DE](#)

- **Source:**
USDOS - US Department of State
- **Title:**
Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2013 - China - Tibet
- **Publication date:**
27 February 2014
- **ecoi.net summary:** Tibet: Annual report on human rights in 2013 [ID 270630]
- **Countries:**
China
- **Original link** <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2013&dliid=220187>

Recommended citation:

USDOS - US Department of State: Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2013 - China - Tibet, 27 February 2014 (available at [ecoi.net](http://www.ecoi.net))
http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/270630/386067_en.html (accessed 05 May 2014)



Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2013 - China - Tibet

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States recognizes the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and Tibetan autonomous prefectures (TAPs) and counties in other provinces to be a part of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) Central Committee oversees Tibet policies in the PRC. Chen Quanguo, an ethnic Han from Henan Province, became the TAR party secretary in 2011. Ethnic Han were party secretaries in eight of the 10 TAPs, which are located in Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces. Two TAPs in Qinghai Province had ethnic Tibetan party secretaries. As in other predominantly minority areas of the PRC, ethnic Han CCP members held almost all top party, government, police, and military positions in the TAR and other Tibetan areas. Ultimate authority rests with the 25-member Central Committee Political Bureau (Politburo) of the CCP and its seven-member Standing Committee in Beijing. Civilian authorities generally maintained effective control of the security forces. Security forces committed human rights abuses.

During the year the government's respect for and protection of human rights in the TAR and other Tibetan areas remained poor. Under the banner of maintaining social stability and combating separatism, the government engaged in the severe repression of Tibet's unique religious, cultural, and linguistic heritage by, among other means, strictly curtailing the civil rights of China's ethnic Tibetan population, including the freedoms of speech, religion, association, assembly, and movement. The government routinely vilified the Dalai Lama and blamed the "Dalai clique" and "other outside forces" for instigating instability and the at least 26 self-immolations by Tibetan laypersons, monks, and nuns that reportedly occurred during the year.

Other serious human rights abuses included extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial detentions, and house arrests. There was a perception among Tibetans that authorities systemically targeted them for political repression, economic marginalization, and cultural assimilation, as well as educational and employment discrimination. The presence of the People's Armed Police (PAP) and other security forces remained at high levels in many communities across the Tibetan Plateau. Repression was severe throughout the year but increased in the periods before and during politically and religiously sensitive anniversaries and events. Students, monks, laypersons, and others in many Tibetan areas were detained after reportedly demanding freedom and human rights, and expressing their support for the Dalai Lama.

The government strictly controlled information about, and access to, the TAR and Tibetan areas outside the TAR, making it difficult to determine accurately the scope of human rights abuses. The Chinese government severely restricted travel by foreign journalists to Tibetan areas. Additionally, the Chinese government subjected Tibetans who spoke to foreign reporters, attempted to provide information to persons outside the country, or communicated information regarding protests or other expressions of discontent through cell phones, e-mail, or the internet to harassment or detention. The Chinese government also denied multiple requests by U.S. and other foreign diplomats for permission to visit the TAR, and repeatedly prevented foreign

diplomatic personnel from visiting Tibetan areas outside the TAR for which permission was not officially required. Because of these restrictions, many of the incidents and cases mentioned in this report could not be independently verified.

Disciplinary procedures were opaque, and it was not clear that security or other authorities were punished for behavior defined under Chinese laws and regulations as abuses of power and authority. Impunity appeared to be a problem.

Tibetan Self-Immolations

At least 26 Tibetans reportedly self-immolated during the year, including laypersons and Tibetan Buddhist clergy, which was significantly fewer than the 83 self-immolations reported in 2012. The majority of self-immolators were laypersons, as opposed to current or former Buddhist monks or nuns. The vast majority of these incidents resulted in death.

Prior to March 2012 all of the reported self-immolators were current or former monks or nuns. However, as highlighted in the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) August 2012 report *Tibetan Self-Immolation – Rising Frequency, Wider Spread, Greater Diversity*, self-immolation by laypersons grew markedly during the latter half of 2012. By the end of 2012 laypersons represented more than half of the self-immolations committed that year. That trend continued with only 10 of the 26 self-immolators being monks or nuns.

Self-immolators reportedly continued to see their act as a protest against political and religious oppression. For example, according to media reports, Lobsang Namgyal, formerly a monk at the Kirti Monastery and the 100th Tibetan to self-immolate in China since March 2009, called for the long life of the Dalai Lama while in the act of self-immolating. The Chinese government implemented policies that punish friends, relatives, and associates of self-immolators. In March 2012 the head of the Aba (Ngaba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture (T&QAP) government, Wu Zegang, asserted that Tibetans who committed self-immolation were being “used by separatists to create chaos.” Alleging that the self-immolators had been in communication with the Tibetan exile community, Wu stated, “the Dalai Lama clique and overseas splittist forces are viciously leading Tibetan Buddhism onto the track of extremism. By touting self-immolators as so-called heroes and performing religious rituals to make amends for the sins of the dead, they support and inspire self-immolations. They instigate people to emulate and will not hesitate to use the terroristic behavior of sacrificing people’s lives to reach their separatist objective.”

According to various overseas rights groups, in November 2012 the government of Huangnan (Malho) TAP, Qinghai Province, issued a notice to local party members and government officials ordering them to discipline bereaved family members of self-immolators by withholding public benefits, including disaster relief. The notice also called for the punishment of laypersons, monastic personnel, family members, and officials who organized or participated in burial or mourning activities. Authorities subjected villages where self-immolations took place to the cancellation of publicly funded development and disaster relief projects, and subjected monasteries found to have participated in or organized fundraising activities or prayer ceremonies for self-immolators or their families to cancellation of public funding or even closure.

A December 2012 editorial in the *Gansu Daily*, an online news site, noted that the Supreme People’s Court, the Supreme People’s Procuratorate, and the Ministry of Public Security had jointly issued the “Opinion on Handling Cases of Self-Immolation in Tibetan Areas According to Law,” which criminalizes various activities associated with self-immolation, including “organizing, plotting, inciting, compelling, luring, instigating, or helping others to commit self-immolation,” each of which may be prosecuted as “intentional homicide.” According to the opinion, the motive of self-immolators was “generally to split the country,” and the act constituted criminal behavior, since it posed a threat to public safety and public order. The opinion stated that “ringleaders” would be targeted for “major punishment.”

Not long after the announcement of the “Opinion on Handling Cases of Self-Immolation in Tibetan Areas According to Law,” government officials began detaining, arresting, trying, and sentencing a number of friends, relatives, and associates of self-immolators across the Tibetan Plateau, a trend that continued throughout the year. In February official media reported nearly 90 formal arrests of individuals in Qinghai and Gansu provinces linked to self-immolators. In January the Intermediate People’s Court of Aba (Ngaba) T&QAP, Sichuan Province, sentenced Kirti Monastery monk Lobsang Konchok to death with a two-year reprieve after convicting him of “intentional homicide” for “inciting and coercing eight people to self-immolate, resulting in three deaths.” Authorities sentenced his nephew, Lobsang Tsering, to 10 years in prison on the same charges. In August the same court sentenced Dolma Kyab (also known as Droma Gyap) to death. Authorities accused Dolma Kyab of strangling his wife to death and then lighting her body on fire, but *Phayul* (a news website maintained by Tibetan exiles) and other sources claimed that his wife died after setting herself on fire in protest against Chinese rule.

Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings. There were no reports that officials investigated or punished those responsible for such killings.

Phayul reported that Kaldo, a former Chamdo Monastery monk, died on April 28 in Zuogong (Dzogang) County, Changdu (Chamdo) Prefecture, TAR, after being beaten by police, who had detained him a week earlier for possessing recordings of speeches by the Dalai Lama.

Citing a former political prisoner, *Phayul* reported in August that police in Hongyuan (Khyungchu) County, Aba (Ngaba) T&QAP, Sichuan Province, arrested Guldrak for alleged involvement in a theft, beat him to death, and then claimed he had committed suicide. Up to 500 Tibetans, including members of Guldrak's family, assembled outside the police station to contest the official explanation for his death, and authorities reportedly admitted that he died in police custody due to beatings. Authorities agreed to pay the family renminbi (RMB) 50,000 (\$8,180) to cover burial fees.

Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported that in October security forces killed four and injured 50 others in the TAR's Biru (Driru) County, Naqu (Nagchu) Prefecture, when they fired into a crowd demanding the release of a person who had been detained for leading protests against government orders to fly Chinese flags from homes in the area.

Disappearance

Authorities in Tibetan areas continued to detain Tibetans arbitrarily for indefinite periods of time.

The whereabouts of the Panchen Lama, Gedun Choekyi Nyima, Tibetan Buddhism's second-most prominent figure after the Dalai Lama, remained unknown. The Chinese government has not made any public statements about his situation since 2010.

The whereabouts of Tashi Chowang and Aphu Sonam, students from the Dhungkar Language School in Lhasa who were arrested after Tashi Chowang's uncle self-immolated in October 2012, remained unknown.

Torture and Other Cruel and Degrading Treatment

According to the PRC's constitution, "the State respects and protects human rights." Judges cannot apply the constitution in court cases, however, in part because interpretation is reserved to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

Police and prison authorities employed torture and degrading treatment in dealing with some detainees and prisoners.

There were reports during the year that Chinese officials tortured some Tibetans while incarcerated or otherwise in custody, including by electric shocks, exposure to extreme temperatures, severe beatings, and being forced to perform heavy physical labor. Security forces routinely subjected detainees and prisoners to "political re-education" sessions.

According to an April 2 *New York Times* report, authorities released Jigme Gyatso, a former monk accused of leading a counterrevolutionary organization, after he spent 17 years in prison. He was reportedly extremely frail after years of torture and poor medical care.

According to a May 27 *Phayul* report, authorities released Lobsang Tenzin on medical parole after he had spent 25 years in prison for participating in anti-China protests in Lhasa in 1988. He remained under house arrest, reportedly undergoing medical treatment for injuries suffered as a result of torture during his imprisonment.

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

The number of prisoners was unknown. There were reports of recently released prisoners who were permanently disabled or in extremely poor health because of the harsh treatment they endured in prison. According to numerous sources, political prisoners endured unsanitary conditions and often had little opportunity to wash or bathe. Many prisoners slept on the floor without blankets or sheets. Former prisoners reported being isolated in small cells for as long as three months and deprived of sunlight, adequate food, water, and blankets. Additionally, prison authorities banned religious observances and forced prisoners, particularly political prisoners, to attend political re-education sessions.

According to sources prisoners rarely received medical care except in the case of serious illness. Former prisoners also complained that they often failed to receive money, food, clothing, and books from their families because prison guards confiscated such items.

There were cases of persons detained and imprisoned who were denied visitors, including family members and legal counsel. Authorities apparently applied this policy to many detainees and prisoners, but more routinely and stringently to political detainees and prisoners. Authorities required those allowed to see their family members to speak Mandarin Chinese (as opposed to their native Tibetan) during the visit.

As elsewhere in the PRC, authorities did not permit independent monitoring of prisons.

Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

Arbitrary arrest and detention was a problem in Tibetan areas. With a detention warrant, police may legally detain persons for up to 37 days without formally arresting or charging them. Police must notify the relatives or employer of a detained person within 24 hours of the detention. Following the 37-day period, police must either formally arrest or release the detainee. Police frequently violated these requirements. It was unclear how many Tibetan detainees were held under the Re-education Through Labor (RTL) system or under other forms of detention not subject to judicial review.

According to a January 30 RFA report, authorities summoned 14 senior monks from leading Lhasa monasteries and detained them at Penkar Monastery in Naqu (Nagchu) Prefecture, TAR, for “political re-education.”

According to a July 2 RFA report, authorities in Basu (Pashoe) County, Changdu (Chamdo) Prefecture, TAR, detained monk Lobsang Gendun after he shouted slogans calling for Tibetan independence during official celebrations of Communist Party rule.

Denial of Fair Public Trial

Legal safeguards for detained or imprisoned Tibetans were inadequate in both design and implementation. According to a July Xinhua report, there were 81 above-county-level legal aid agencies under the TAR Department of Justice, and prisoners had the right to request a meeting with a government-appointed attorney, but in practical terms many defendants, particularly political defendants, did not have access to legal representation.

During the year the heads of the TAR Legal Affairs Committee, Justice Department, Procuratorate, and Public Security Department were all ethnic Han. The deputy head of the TAR Justice Department, who concurrently served as general director of the TAR Lawyers’ Association, was also ethnic Han.

According to RFA on March 11, police in Gande (Gade) County, Guoluo (Golog) TAP, Qinghai Province, detained Tritsun, a monk from Tongkyab Monastery, after he published a book about Tibetan self-immolations. Police reportedly notified Tritsun’s mother that the courts convicted and sentenced him to prison only after the fact and failed to disclose the length of his sentence or his whereabouts. Police also told his mother that she could not visit her son.

Trial Procedures

In cases that authorities claimed involved “endangering state security” or “separatism,” trials often were cursory and closed. Authorities sentenced Tibetans for alleged support of Tibetan independence regardless of whether they were alleged to have committed violent acts.

According to a 2011 *Tibet Daily* article, as of 2009 there were 17 law firms and 101 attorneys in the TAR. Of the 17 law firms, 11 had their own CCP committee, and six shared a CCP committee with the Justice Bureau in their prefecture. As is required throughout the PRC, authorities assigned a CCP development leader to law firms that had no party organization. On April 20, Wu Yingjie, the executive deputy party secretary of the TAR, called on lawyers in the region to strengthen their ideological support for the notion that “stability overrides all else.”

In an August 25 public announcement, the TAR government stated that law enforcement authorities in the TAR were hiring 355 rural legal workers. Among the qualifications required of applicants were “firmly following the Party line and fighting against separatism with a resolute political stance.”

Political Prisoners and Detainees

An unknown number of Tibetans were detained, arrested, and/or sentenced as a result of their political or religious activity. Many prisoners were held in extrajudicial RTL prisons and never appeared in public court. In the CCP document “Decisions on Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening Reform,” adopted November 12 at the Third Plenum of the 18th CCP Central Committee, the party announced its intention to abolish RTL. On December 28, the National People’s Congress Standing Committee abolished the RTL system, effective January 1, 2014. Also in December Amnesty International published a report stating that authorities were replacing many RTL detention centers with other forms of extrajudicial detention.

Based on information available from the CECC political prisoner database, as of September 1, 642 Tibetan political prisoners were detained or imprisoned, most in Tibetan areas. Observers believed the actual number of Tibetan political prisoners and detainees to be much higher, but the lack of access to prisoners and prisons, as well as the dearth of reliable official statistics, made a determination difficult. An unknown number of persons continued to be held under the RTL system. Of the 642 Tibetan political prisoners tracked by the CECC, 622 were ethnic Tibetans detained on or after March 10, 2008, and 20 were Tibetans detained prior to March 10, 2008. Of the 622 Tibetan political prisoners who were detained on or after March 10, 2008, 288 were believed or presumed to be detained or imprisoned in Sichuan Province, 143 in the TAR, 122 in Qinghai Province, 68 in

Gansu Province, and one in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. There were 182 persons serving known sentences, which ranged from 18 months to life imprisonment. The average sentence length was six years and three months. Of the 182 persons serving known sentences, 79 were monks, nuns, or Tibetan Buddhist teachers.

Sentencing information was available for 16 of the 20 Tibetan political prisoners detained prior to March 10, 2008, and believed imprisoned as of September 1. Their sentences ranged from eight years to life imprisonment. The average fixed-term sentence was 13 years and one month.

According to a *Phayul* report, in February the Intermediate People's Court in Huangnan (Malho) Prefecture, Qinghai Province, sentenced Agu Gyatag to a four-year prison term for advocating separatism. Chinese authorities arrested Agu Gyatag for allegedly talking about Tibetan independence and providing material assistance to the family members of Tibetan self-immolators in the area.

In April the Intermediate People's Court in Huangnan (Malho) Prefecture, Qinghai Province, sentenced four Tibetans to varying prison terms of up to six years for "inciting separatism." According to an April 12 press release from the Central Tibetan Administration, which is based in India, the four had disseminated information about self-immolations.

Freedom of Speech and Press

Freedom of Speech: Tibetans who spoke to foreign reporters, attempted to provide information to persons outside the country, or communicated information regarding protests or other expressions of discontent through cell phones, e-mail, or the internet were subject to harassment or detention. The whereabouts of 59 individuals convicted in 2009 for "creating and spreading rumors" after the 2008 unrest remained unknown. During the year TAR authorities sought to strengthen control over electronic media further and to punish individuals for the "creating and spreading of rumors." In November, TAR Communist Party Secretary Chen Quanguo wrote in an official party journal that the government was working to ensure that the "voice and image of the enemy forces and the Dalai clique are neither seen nor heard." Sources reported that many Tibetans, particularly monks, scholars, students, and government officials, avoided sensitive topics, even in private conversations in their own homes.

The nongovernmental organization (NGO) Chinese Human Rights Defenders reported that between October 11 and 18 Chinese authorities detained a number of persons and held them incommunicado in a crackdown in Biru (Driru) County, TAR. They were protesting a requirement that the Chinese flag be flown from their homes. The protest spread from Biru's Mowa Village to Lhasa and areas outside the TAR.

Biru police detained writer Tsultrim Gyaltzen and his colleague, Yugyal, a former police officer, alleging that they had "engaged in separatist activities and disrupted social stability by spreading rumors." Police seized Gyaltzen after he publicly disagreed with speeches given by high-ranking TAR officials about the continuing crackdown. Police also detained a Tibetan layman (Dawa Lhundup), a nun, (Jampa), and two monks who had fled Biru for Lhasa in September (Jampa Lekshay and Kelnam Namgyal) on charges of "leaking state secrets." Police detained a woman named Kelsang after they found images of the Dalai Lama and songs about Tibetan independence on her cell phone. Additionally, police detained layman Tenzin Rangdol on October 19. His detention triggered a protest the next day, when armed police seized more than 10 other individuals appealing for Rangdol's release.

Press Freedoms: The government severely restricted travel by foreign journalists. A few foreign journalists visited the TAR by participating in highly structured, government-organized tours during which the constant presence of government minders made independent reporting difficult. For example, on September 2, journalist Rowan Callick wrote in *The Australian*, "I had accepted an invitation from the State Council Information Office--the media arm of China's cabinet--to visit Tibet, since there is no other way in which journalists can enter without subterfuge." Callick disputed reports carried in Chinese state media that he had made positive statements about the situation in Tibet during his visit. Outside the TAR authorities often barred foreign journalists from entering or expelled them from Tibetan areas despite government rules, adopted in 2008, which state that foreign journalists do not need the permission of local authorities to conduct reporting. Officials in Qinghai Province have told reporters that all Tibetan areas are off-limits to foreign reporters, according to a report released by the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China.

According to the *Tibet Post International*, on May 14, a Chinese court in Qinghai sentenced Gartse Jigme, a monk from Gartse Monastery, Zeku (Tsekhog) County, Huangnan (Malho) TAP, Qinghai, to five years imprisonment reportedly for having included "political content" in his writings. His condition and whereabouts were unknown.

The government continued to jam radio broadcasts of Voice of America (VOA) and RFA's Tibetan- and Chinese-language services in some Tibetan areas, as well as the Voice of Tibet. In Tibetan areas of southern Gansu Province, Qinghai Province, and the Ganzi (Kardze) TAP, Sichuan Province, police confiscated or destroyed satellite dishes suspected of receiving VOA Tibetan-language television, as well as VOA and RFA audio satellite channels. Some dishes were replaced with government-controlled cable television systems. Some

Tibetans reported that they could listen to overseas Tibetan-language radio and television broadcasts through the internet.

Domestic journalists generally did not report on repression in Tibetan areas. Authorities promptly censored the postings of bloggers who did so, and the authors sometimes faced punishment. Security officials regularly placed Beijing-based Tibetan blogger and poet Woesser under de facto house arrest throughout the year. Woesser, who has documented Tibetan protests and self-immolations, and advocated for human rights for Tibetans, environmental protection for the Tibetan Plateau, and the preservation of Tibetan culture and religion, was kept under house arrest for several months in Lhasa after authorities refused to permit her to return to Beijing following her annual summer visit. During the year Chinese officials' refusal to issue her a passport prevented her from traveling overseas to receive the Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award in person. According to an RFA report, authorities again placed Woesser and her husband, Wang Lixiong, under house arrest in Beijing for a few weeks in June after she spoke out on conditions in Tibet ahead of a state-sponsored trip by foreign journalists to the TAR.

Authorities tightly controlled journalists who worked for the domestic press and could hire and fire them on the basis of political reliability. For example, on March 9, the *TAR Daily* newspaper released a job announcement seeking a number of media employees. One of the listed job requirements was "political ideological performance."

Violence and Harassment: Chinese officials harassed Cyril Payen, a French journalist who made a documentary about Tibet. After a French news station broadcast the documentary in May, Chinese embassy personnel went to the station's headquarters in Paris to demand the withdrawal of the documentary from the station's website. An employee of the Chinese embassy in Bangkok also left a threatening message on Payen's telephone, according to Reporters Without Borders.

On August 1, Tibetan writer and schoolteacher Gangkye Drubpa Kyab reportedly was sentenced to five years and six months in jail for alleged separatist political activities. More than 20 security officers who came to his home in Seda (Serthar) County, Ganzi (Kardze) TAP, Sichuan Province, took him into custody in February 2012. He is the author of a book about unrest in Tibetan areas published in 2008.

Dhondup Wangchen, a filmmaker who was sentenced to six years in prison in 2009 on charges related to his production of a 25-minute documentary, *Leaving Fear Behind*, that documented human rights problems in Tibetan areas, remained in prison and was said to be suffering from hepatitis. According to a January 22 *Phayul* report, he suffered harsh treatment and months of solitary confinement at the TAR's Xichuan labor camp before authorities transferred him to the Qinghai Provincial Women's Prison.

Internet Freedom

Authorities curtailed cell phone and internet service in the TAR and Tibetan areas of Sichuan, Qinghai, and Gansu provinces during times of unrest and politically sensitive periods, such as the March anniversaries of the 2008 protests and "Serf Emancipation Day," around the Dalai Lama's birthday in July, and during the 18th Party Congress conference. Additionally, many websites were shut and internet cafes closely monitored during major religious and cultural festivals in Tibetan areas. The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, an NGO based in Dharamsala, India, reported that authorities in Lhasa systematically searched the cell phones of monks in March. In February, TAR Party Secretary Chen Quanguo stated that "stability overrides everything else, hence new media, including cell phones and the internet, must be fully managed in order to protect the public interest and national security."

Authorities blocked foreign-based, Tibet-related websites critical of official policy in Tibetan areas to users in China throughout the year. Well organized computer hacking attacks originating from China harassed Tibet activists and organizations outside China. Authorities harassed and detained Tibet internet activists inside China. Security agencies responsible for monitoring the internet often lacked the language skills necessary to monitor Tibetan content efficiently. As a result authorities subjected Tibetan-language blogs and websites to indiscriminate censorship and closed entire sites even when the content did not appear to touch on sensitive topics. Many teachers and scholars in the TAR and Tibetan areas of Sichuan, Gansu, and Qinghai provinces reported receiving official warnings after using their cell phones to exchange what was deemed to be sensitive information in Tibetan script.

On March 5, official media reported that the Internet Security Supervision Detachment of the Lhasa Public Security Bureau (PSB) required the owners of all Lhasa internet cafes to attend an "internet cafe security management" meeting, where they had to sign a "responsibility document" pledging to ensure internet security.

On April 28, Qinghai Province held a conference on "internet and information security management," calling on relevant authorities to crack down on "harmful information" and "purify the internet."

Academic Freedom and Cultural Events

Authorities in Tibetan areas required professors and students at institutions of higher education to attend political education sessions in an effort to prevent "separatist" political and religious activities on campus. Authorities frequently encouraged ethnic Tibetan academics to participate in government propaganda efforts, such as making public speeches supporting government policies or accepting interviews by official media. Academics who refused to cooperate with such efforts faced diminished prospects for promotion. Academics in the PRC who publicly criticized CCP policies on Tibetan affairs faced official reprisal. The government controlled curricula, texts, and other course materials, as well as the publication of historically or politically sensitive academic books. Authorities frequently denied many Tibetan academics permission to travel overseas for conferences and academic or cultural exchanges.

In January, TAR authorities held a conference on "law enforcement work in the cultural market" during which party and government officials were urged to protect "ideological and cultural security" in the TAR with "firm political consciousness" and "strong political responsibility."

At a February meeting in Lhasa, senior leaders of the TAR discussed publication priorities for the year. TAR party and government leaders were urged to "ensure the absolute security of Tibetan ideological and cultural fields."

On May 18, the *Tibet Daily* published an article on cultural development in the region and asked officials in charge of cultural development to promote such themes as "communism, socialism, and the People's Liberation Army are good," "love the party and the motherland," and "materialism and atheism."

In July senior TAR officials urged relevant officials to crack down on illegal publications about Tibet and "reactionary propaganda materials," to improve their capacity to gather and delete illegal online information, to find the source of illegal information, and to shut down underground printing houses.

The TAR Tourism Bureau continued its general policy of refusing to hire ethnic Tibetan tour guides who were educated in India or Nepal. Government officials stated that all tour guides working in the TAR must seek employment with the Tourism Bureau and pass a licensing exam on tourism and political ideology. The government's stated intent was to ensure that all tour guides provided visitors with the government's position opposing Tibetan independence and the activities of the Dalai Lama. Ethnic Tibetan tour guides in the TAR faced competition from government-sponsored "Help Tibet" tour guides brought from inland China, apparently for their greater political reliability, and put to work after receiving a crash course on Tibet. According to Xinhua News Agency, under the "Help Tibet Tour Guide Program," the government has sent 612 non-Tibetan tour guides to the TAR from other parts of China since 2003.

Policies promoting planned urban economic growth, rapid infrastructure development, the influx of non-Tibetans to traditionally Tibetan areas, expansion of the tourism industry, forced resettlement of nomads and farmers, and weakening of Tibetan-language education in public schools continued to disrupt traditional living patterns and customs.

Lhasa security authorities continued to search some private homes and businesses for photographs of the Dalai Lama and other politically forbidden items. Police examined the cell phones of Lhasa residents to search for "reactionary music" from India and photographs of the Dalai Lama. Authorities reportedly even deemed certain ringtones subversive and grounds for detention. From January to March, authorities in Hainan (Tsolho) Prefecture, Qinghai Province, deployed 180 persons to raid 36 printing houses and 155 cultural enterprises. They confiscated 2,684 illegal DVDs and 500 pictures, and punished four internet cafes. In June there were reports that local governments in some parts of Qinghai Province and the TAR had decided to allow private displays of photos of the Dalai Lama, a policy change later denied by government officials.

On March 28, the TAR marked its fifth annual observance of "Serf Emancipation Day," commemorating the day in 1959 that China's rulers formally dissolved the Kashag (the governing council of Tibet). During the official celebration, authorities required government officials and representatives from rural villages and monasteries to denounce the Dalai Lama and praise the Communist Party of China.

Observers continued to express concern that development projects and other central government policies disproportionately benefited non-Tibetans and resulted in a considerable influx of ethnic Han and Hui persons into the TAR. Many major infrastructure projects across the Tibetan Plateau were engineered and implemented by large state-owned enterprises based in other provinces, and managed and staffed by professionals and low-wage temporary migrant workers from other provinces, rather than by local residents. Many persons from outside the TAR who had spent years living in the TAR maintained their official registration in another province and thus were not counted as TAR residents. The government continued to improve public services provided to the migrant population in the TAR significantly, particularly in the areas of education and health care, and provided financial support to new businesses established by migrants.

Even in areas officially designated as "autonomous," Tibetans generally lacked the right to play a meaningful role in the protection of their cultural heritage and unique natural environment, and faced arrest and intimidation if they protested against mining or other industrial activities that they believed were harmful to the environment or sacred sites.

On August 16, Chinese security forces used tear gas to disperse Tibetans protesting against diamond mining in Zaduo (Zatoo) County, Yushu (Yushu) Prefecture, Qinghai Province, injuring several Tibetans.

In August 2012 approximately 1,000 Tibetans marched to a mining site in Mangkang (Markham) County, Changdu (Chamdo) Prefecture, TAR, to protest the large operation, which they believed to be environmentally hazardous. Security personnel responded by firing tear gas and live rounds, causing the death of a Tibetan named Nyima, and arrested six others, including five whom authorities identified as Dawa, Atsong, Phuntsog Nyima, Jamyang Wangmo, and Kelsang Yudron. Their whereabouts and conditions remained unknown.

Tibetan and Mandarin Chinese are official languages in the TAR, and both languages appeared on some, but not all, public and commercial signs. Inside official buildings and businesses, including banks, post offices, and hospitals, signage in Tibetan was frequently lacking, and in many instances forms and documents were available only in Mandarin. Mandarin was widely spoken, was used for most official communications, and was the predominant language of instruction in public schools in many Tibetan areas. China's Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law states that "schools (classes and grades) and other institutions of education where most of the students come from minority nationalities shall, whenever possible, use textbooks in their own languages and use their languages as the media of instruction" (Article 37).

The Tibetan-language curriculum for primary and middle schools in Tibetan areas was predominantly translated directly from the standard national

Mandarin-language curriculum, offering Tibetan students little insight into their own culture and history. Few elementary schools in Tibetan areas used Tibetan as the primary language of instruction, and some did not offer any instruction in Tibetan. Despite guarantees of cultural and linguistic rights, in middle and high schools--even some officially designated as Tibetan-language schools--Tibetan was usually used only to teach classes on Tibetan language, literature, and culture. All other classes were taught in Mandarin. Of 17 high schools in Aba (Ngaba), T&QAP, Sichuan Province, only four taught primarily in Tibetan. In early 2011 the TAR government began an effort to strengthen free compulsory bilingual preschool education in rural areas by establishing 217 bilingual kindergartens. Qinghai Province, and Ganzi (Kardze) TAP and Aba (Ngaba) T&QAP, Sichuan Province, announced similar programs in 2011.

According to a January 10 RFA report, authorities in Aba (Ngaba) T&QAP and Ganzi (Kardze) TAP, Sichuan Province, banned Tibetan-language classes taught by volunteers to students during winter break.

According to a June 12 RFA report, a court in Qinghai Province sentenced Wangchuk Dorje, a student at the Middle School of Nationalities in Huangnan (Malho) TAP, Qinghai Province, to four years in prison for being one of the main organizers of a student protest in Huangnan. Several thousand students took to the streets in November 2012 to demand the right to use Tibetan as their language of instruction in schools. The students shouted slogans calling for the "equality of nationalities and freedom of languages" and demanding the return of the Dalai Lama.

Proficiency in Mandarin was essential to qualify for higher education and to obtain a government job in the PRC. China's most prestigious universities provided no instruction in Tibetan or other ethnic minority languages. "Nationalities" universities, established to serve ethnic minority students and ethnic Han students interested in ethnic minority subjects, offered Tibetan-language instruction only in courses focused on the study of the Tibetan language or culture. Since

Tibetan-language instruction was not offered for other higher-education subjects, there was a dearth of technically trained and qualified ethnic Tibetans, and migrants from other areas of China typically filled jobs in Tibetan areas that required technical skills and qualifications.

According to overseas Tibetan sources cited by *Phayul*, authorities arrested Kalsang Yarphel, a popular singer, in Lhasa on July 14. Chinese authorities deemed as subversive his songs that encouraged Tibetans to speak Tibetan and think about Tibet's future.

Freedom of Religion

See the Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report* at www.state.gov/j/drl/irf/rpt/.

Freedom of Movement

Chinese law provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation. In practical terms, however, the government severely restricted travel and freedom of movement of ethnic Tibetans, particularly Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns.

In-country Movement: Freedom of movement for all Tibetans, but particularly for monks and nuns, remained severely restricted throughout the TAR, as well as in other Tibetan areas. The PAP and local PSBs set up roadblocks and checkpoints on major roads, in cities, and on the outskirts of cities and monasteries, particularly

around sensitive dates. Tibetans traveling in monastic attire were subject to extra scrutiny by police at roadside checkpoints.

Following the May 2012 self-immolation in Lhasa of two young Tibetans from Tibetan areas of Sichuan and Gansu provinces (the first instances of self-immolation in Lhasa in recent years), authorities largely banned Tibetans from outside the TAR, particularly monks and nuns, from traveling to the TAR without first obtaining special official travel documents. Many Tibetans reported encountering difficulties in obtaining the required travel documents. This not only made it difficult for Tibetans to make pilgrimages to sacred religious sites in the TAR but also obstructed land-based travel to India through Nepal. During the year some Tibetans reported that authorities no longer required them to obtain special official travel documents to visit the TAR but required them to register with local authorities upon arrival in the TAR. Some Tibetans from outside the TAR that traveled to Lhasa also reported that in Lhasa authorities required them to notify a police officer posted in their hotel lobby of their plans on a daily basis. Additionally, many nonlocal Tibetan monks, nuns, and laypersons who had resided in the TAR for as long as 15 years were expelled in 2011 and 2012. Authorities have not allowed many to return. For example, in December 2012 a young Tibetan artist in Chengdu reported that government officials had forced him to leave the TAR after discovering that he was originally from Sichuan Province's Ganzi (Kardze) TAP. The artist had worked for two years at a famous TAR monastery painting and restoring sacred thangka paintings. Even outside the TAR, many Tibetan monks and nuns reported that it remained difficult to travel beyond their home monasteries, with officials frequently denying permission for visiting monks to stay temporarily at a monastery for religious education.

Authorities allowed many nonethnic Tibetans, particularly ethnic Han Tibetan Buddhists, only temporary visits to Tibetan Buddhist monasteries. Implementation of this restriction was especially rigorous in the TAR and Tibetan areas in Sichuan Province.

Foreign Travel: Many Tibetans, particularly prominent religious and cultural figures, scholars, and activists, as well as those from rural areas, continued to report difficulties in obtaining new, or renewing existing, passports. Some Tibetans reported they were able to obtain passports only after paying substantial bribes or making promises not to travel to India. In other cases authorities precluded Tibetan students admitted to foreign schools from studying abroad by refusing to issue them passports. According to reports some ethnic Tibetan government and CCP cadres in the TAR and Ganzi (Kardze) TAP, Sichuan Province, were not allowed to send their children to study abroad. Some Tibetans, who left the PRC for India without proper documentation, reported being able to return on a limited basis, and then were allowed to leave again for India through Nepal.

Tibetans continued to encounter substantial difficulties and obstacles in traveling to India for religious, educational, and other purposes. Contacts also reported instances of local authorities' revoking the passports of individuals who had traveled to India. Tight border controls sharply limited the number of persons crossing the border into Nepal and India. In 2012, 242 Tibetan refugees transited Nepal through the Tibetan Reception Center, run by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Kathmandu, on route to permanent settlement in India, down from 739 in 2011 and 874 in 2010.

The government restricted the movement of Tibetans in the period before and during sensitive anniversaries and events and increased controls over border areas at these times. Travel remained difficult, and communications were sometimes cut off, particularly in the TAR and in Tibetan areas of Sichuan Province.

The government regulated travel by foreigners to the TAR. In accordance with a 1989 regulation, foreign visitors must obtain an official confirmation letter issued by the government before entering the TAR. Most tourists obtained such letters by booking tours through officially registered travel agencies. In the TAR a government-designated tour guide must accompany foreign tourists at all times. It was rare for foreigners to obtain permission to enter the TAR by road.

In what has become an annual practice, authorities banned many foreign tourists from the TAR in the period before and during the March anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan uprising and the dual anniversaries in July of the founding of the CCP and the "peaceful liberation" of Tibet. Foreign tourists also faced restrictions traveling to Tibetan areas outside the TAR, particularly Aba (Ngaba) T&QAP and Ganzi (Kardze) TAP, Sichuan Province, although the government never issued publicly available formal prohibitions on travel to these areas. Anecdotal evidence suggested that the decline in the number of foreign tourists to the TAR was more than offset by an increase in domestic visitors to the TAR. Unlike foreign tourists, ethnic Han tourists do not need special permits to visit the TAR, nor are they subject to rules governing the size of their group or the means of transport used to enter the TAR.

Officials continued to restrict severely the access of foreign diplomats and journalists to Tibet. Foreign officials were able to travel to the region only with the permission of the TAR Foreign Affairs Office, and even then only on closely chaperoned trips arranged by that office. Such permission was difficult to obtain. U.S. government officials submitted more than 16 requests for diplomatic access to the TAR between May 2011 and November, but only two were granted. In June the U.S. ambassador to China led the first U.S. visit to the TAR in more than two years. In October two consular officers from the U.S. consulate general in Chengdu were allowed to travel to the TAR to assist a group of U.S. citizens injured in a vehicle accident. Permission was granted only after a

prolonged delay and repeated requests by senior U.S. officials. U.S. and other foreign diplomats who lawfully traveled in some Tibetan areas outside the TAR, such as Sichuan Province's Ganzi (Kardze) TAP and Aba (Ngaba) T&QAP, were frequently approached by local police and often forced to leave without reasonable explanation. With the exception of a few highly controlled trips, authorities repeatedly denied requests for international journalists to visit the TAR and other Tibetan areas (see section on Freedom of Speech and Press).

Discrimination and Societal Abuses

Women

Rape and Domestic Violence: There was no confirmed information on the incidence of rape or domestic violence.

Reproductive Rights: Family planning policies permitted ethnic Tibetans and members of some other minority groups to have more children than ethnic Han. Some Tibetans that worked for the government reported pressure from their work units to have only one child. Depending upon the county, authorities sometimes encouraged rural Tibetans in the TAR to limit births to three children. Unlike other areas in the PRC where gender ratios were skewed by sex-selective abortion and inadequate health care for female infants, the TAR did not have a skewed gender ratio.

Prostitution in Tibetan areas was not uncommon. NGOs and health experts have expressed serious concern about the growing prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the TAR and other Tibetan areas.

Discrimination: There were no formal restrictions on women's participation in the political system, and women held many lower-level government positions. Women were underrepresented at the provincial and prefectural levels of government, however. According to an official website, female cadres in the TAR accounted for more than 34.9 percent of the TAR's total cadres. Although China's labor laws require equal pay for equal work and forbid employment discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, race, gender, or religious belief, there were reports in the past that Tibetan women and men employed by companies owned by ethnic Han sometimes earned less than male or female ethnic Han employees in the same job.

Children

Many rural Tibetan areas have implemented China's nationwide "centralized education" policy, which has resulted in the closure of many village schools and the transfer of students, including elementary school students, to boarding schools in towns and cities. Reports indicated that many of the boarding schools did not adequately care for and supervise their young students.

Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/j/tip/.

Ethnic Minorities

Although TAR census figures showed that Tibetans made up 90.5 percent of the TAR's permanently registered population, official figures did not include a large number of long-, medium-, and short-term ethnic Han residents, such as cadres (government and party officials), skilled and unskilled laborers, military and paramilitary troops, and their respective dependents.

Migrants to the TAR were overwhelmingly concentrated in urban areas. Government policies to subsidize economic development often benefited ethnic Han more than ethnic Tibetans, causing resentment. In many predominately ethnic Tibetan cities across the Tibetan Plateau, ethnic Han or Hui migrants owned and managed many of the small businesses, restaurants, and retail shops. Ethnic Tibetans continued to make up nearly 98 percent of those registered as permanent residents in rural areas, according to official census figures.

The government continued its campaign to resettle Tibetan nomads into urban areas and newly created communities in rural areas across the TAR and other Tibetan areas. Officials also offered nomads monetary incentives to kill or sell their livestock and move to newly created Tibetan communities in rural areas. There were reports of compulsory resettlement. According to a December 2012 Xinhua report, more than 408,000 households in the TAR, including 2.1 million farmers and herders, were covered by a resettlement project that provided funds for the construction of permanent housing. According to a January official media report, the government budgeted 875 million RMB (\$143 million) to resettle 460,000 Tibetans. The official press reported an official saying that such resettlement programs were the "foundation for fighting the Dalai clique," and that resettled farmers and herders would "pray to Buddha less and study culture and technology more."

Improving housing conditions, health care, and education for Tibet's poorest were among the stated goals of resettlement, although there was a pattern of settling herders near townships and roads and away from

monasteries, which were the traditional providers of community and social services. A requirement that herders bear a substantial part of the resettlement cost often forced resettled families into debt.

Although an August state media report noted that ethnic Tibetans and other minority ethnic groups made up 70 percent of government employees at the provincial level in the TAR, the top CCP position of TAR party secretary continued to be held by an ethnic Han, and the corresponding position in the vast majority of all TAR counties was also held by an ethnic Han. Also within the TAR, ethnic Han continued to hold a disproportionate number of the top security, military, financial, economic, legal, judicial, and educational positions. Authorities often prohibited Tibetans holding government and CCP positions from openly worshipping at monasteries or otherwise practicing their religion. Of Qinghai Province's six TAPs, four were headed by ethnic Han party secretaries and two by ethnic Tibetan party secretaries. Ethnic Han party secretaries headed Gansu Province's one TAP, Sichuan Province's two TAPs, and Yunnan Province's one TAP. There were several ethnic Tibetan party secretaries at the county level in Tibetan areas of Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan provinces.

Economic and social exclusion was a major source of discontent among a varied cross section of ethnic Tibetans, including business operators, workers, students, university graduates, farmers, and nomads. Some ethnic Tibetans continued to report discrimination in employment, and some job advertisements expressly noted that ethnic Tibetans were not welcome to apply. In the past some have claimed that ethnic Han were hired preferentially for jobs and received higher salaries for the same work. The problem intensified after May 2012, since many Tibetans of outside origin were expelled from the TAR, creating more job and business opportunities for non-Tibetans. Some Tibetans reported that it was more difficult for ethnic Tibetans than ethnic Han to obtain permits and loans to open businesses. Restrictions on international NGOs that provided assistance to Tibetan communities remained, resulting in the lack of many beneficial NGO programs in the TAR and other Tibetan areas.

Government propaganda against alleged Tibetan "pro-independence forces" contributed to Chinese societal discrimination against ordinary Tibetans. Many Tibetan monks and nuns chose to wear nonreligious garb to avoid harassment when traveling outside their monasteries and throughout China. Some Tibetans in Chengdu reported that taxi drivers refused to stop for them and hotels refused to give them rooms.

Societal Violence

Feuds among Tibetan herders and the resulting violence, in some cases including killings, was a serious problem. According to official Qinghai Province news sources, in May two persons were shot and killed and two others were injured during a clash between two villages in Tongren (Rebkong) County, Huangnan (Malho) TAP, over the harvesting of "caterpillar fungus" on disputed grassland. As a result the government conducted a countywide campaign of confiscating guns while carrying out "legal education" in the villages.

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- See more at: <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2013&dliid=220187#wrapper>