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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 constitution of the PRC states Chinese citizens enjoy "freedom of religious belief" but limits protections for religious practice to "normal religious activities." The government applied this term in a manner that was not consistent with China's international human rights commitments with regard to freedom of religion. In practice, the government restricted religious freedom. The constitution also stipulates the right of citizens to believe in or not believe in any religion. Only religious groups belonging to one of the five state-sanctioned "patriotic religious associations" (Buddhist, Taoist, Muslim, Roman Catholic, and Protestant), however, are permitted to register with the government and legally hold worship services. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) demands that religion "adapt to socialism." CCP members are forbidden from holding religious beliefs and from participating in religious activities.

The government's respect for and protection of religious freedom in the TAR and other Tibetan areas were poor, with widespread official interference in religious practice, especially in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and nunneries. There were reports of detention, sentencing (including two death sentences, one with a two-year reprieve), three deaths attributed to police, and other government-initiated violence related to religious issues. Repression was severe and increased around politically sensitive events and religious anniversaries. Official interference in the practice of Tibetan Buddhist religious traditions continued to generate profound grievances. According to reports by journalists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 26 Tibetans, including monks, nuns, and laypersons, self-immolated. The government routinely denigrated the Dalai Lama, whom most Tibetan Buddhists venerate as a spiritual leader, and blamed the "Dalai Clique," other outside forces, and foreign media reports for instigating the self-immolations. Authorities often justified official interference with Tibetan Buddhist monasteries by associating them with separatism and pro-independence activism.

There were reports of Tibetans encountering societal discrimination in employment, while engaging in business or when traveling, but because Tibetan Buddhists' ethnic identity is closely linked with religion, it can be difficult to categorize incidents of intolerance as purely ethnic or religious.

The U.S. government repeatedly urged authorities at multiple levels to respect religious

freedom for all faiths and to allow Tibetans to preserve, practice, teach, and develop their religious traditions. The U.S. government raised individual cases and incidents with the Chinese government. U.S. officials urged the Chinese government to engage in constructive dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, as well as to address the policies that threaten Tibet's distinct religious, cultural, and linguistic identity; such policies are a primary cause of grievances among Tibetans. In the first visit by a U.S. diplomat to the TAR to be approved in over two years, the Ambassador visited Lhasa and nearby areas in June. The Chinese government, however, denied multiple requests by other U.S. and 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. Such interference was particularly acute during anniversaries and periods that Chinese authorities deemed sensitive. In the TAR and most other Tibetan areas, the ability of U.S. diplomatic personnel to speak openly with Tibetan residents and members of the monastic community was severely restricted.

Section I. Religious Demography

According to official data from China's November 2010 census, 2,716,400 ethnic Tibetans make up 91 percent of the TAR's total population. Official census data show ethnic Tibetans constituting 1.8 percent of the total population of Gansu Province, 24.4 percent in Qinghai Province, 2.1 percent in Sichuan Province, and 0.3 percent in Yunnan Province. Some experts believe the 2010 census underreported the number of non-Tibetans living in the TAR.

Most ethnic Tibetans practice Tibetan Buddhism, although a sizeable minority practices Bon, an indigenous religion, and very small minorities practice Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. Some scholars estimate there are as many as 400,000 Bon followers across the Tibetan Plateau. Scholars also estimate there are up to 5,000 ethnic Tibetan Muslims and 700 ethnic Tibetan Catholics in the TAR.

Many Tibetan government officials and CCP members in Tibet are religious believers, despite government and CCP prohibitions against officials holding religious beliefs or participating in religious activities.

Other residents of traditionally Tibetan areas include ethnic Han Chinese, many of whom practice Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, or traditional folk religions, or profess atheism; Hui Muslims; and non-ethnic Tibetan Catholics and Protestants. Approximately 4,000 to 5,000 Muslims worship at mosques within the TAR. A Catholic church with 560 members is located in the traditionally Catholic community of Yanjing in the eastern TAR. Cizhong (Tsodruk), in Diqing (Dechen) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), Yunnan Province, is home to a large Tibetan Catholic congregation. The TAR is home to a small number of Falun Gong adherents, as well as unregistered Christian churches.

According to the State Council Information Office's 2013 white paper *Development and Progress of Tibet*, the TAR has "over 46,000 resident monks and nuns." While no recent official data on the number of Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns in other Tibetan areas of China are available, a 2009 article in the People's Daily (the official newspaper of the CCP) stated the TAR and Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces were home to 120,000 Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

While the constitution permits freedom of religious belief, other laws and policies generally restrict religious freedom. The constitution states citizens enjoy "freedom of religious belief" but limits protections for religious practice to "normal religious activities" and does not define "normal." The government applies this term in a manner that does not meet international human rights commitments for freedom of religion and routinely enforces other laws and policies restricting religious freedom. The constitution bans the state, public organizations, and individuals from compelling citizens to believe in, or not

believe in, any religion. The constitution states religious bodies and affairs are not to be "subject to any foreign control."

The government's 2005 *White Paper on Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities* states, "Organs of self-government in autonomous areas, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and relevant laws, respect and guarantee the freedom of religious belief of ethnic minorities and safeguard all legal and normal religious activities of people of ethnic minorities." Organs of self-government include governments of autonomous regions, prefectures, and counties.

At the national level, the CCP Central Committee's Central Tibet Work Coordination Group, the CCP's United Front Work Department (UFWD), and the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA), with support from officially recognized Buddhist, Catholic, Islamic, and Protestant "patriotic religious associations," are responsible for developing religious management policies. At local levels, party leaders and branches of the UFWD, SARA, and the Buddhist Association of China are required to coordinate implementation of religious policies in monasteries, and many have stationed party cadres and government officials in monasteries.

General affairs in TAR monasteries, which in the past had been managed primarily by monks, are now overseen by Monastery Management Committees (MMCs) and Monastic Government Working Groups (MGWGs), both of which are composed primarily of government officials and CCP members, together with a few carefully selected monks. Since 2011, China has established such groups in most monasteries in the TAR and in many major monasteries in other Tibetan areas.

In accordance with official guidelines for monastery management, leadership of and membership in the various committees and working groups are restricted to "politically reliable, patriotic, and devoted monks, nuns, and party and government officials." Government-selected monks have primary responsibility for conducting "patriotic education campaigns" at each monastery. In some cases the government has established "official working groups" at monasteries, and religious affairs and public security officials personally lead the patriotic education.

On February 4, TAR Party Secretary Chen Quanguo urged party cadres and government officials to "take strong root in the monasteries." On September 17, Chen said the party had deployed 7,000 permanent cadres to work for MGWGs established in each of some 1,800 monasteries in the TAR. Chen said the working groups were particularly important because the CCP considered the TAR to be the frontline in the government's effort to fight against [Tibetan] separatism and the "Dalai [Lama] Clique." A February 2012 report in the *Global Times*, a commercially focused tabloid published by the CCP Central Committee newspaper *People's Daily*, announced the establishment of MMCs headed by party and government officials in each of the TAR's monasteries. An MMC established in 2011 at Lhasa's Jokhang Temple, the holiest monastery for most Tibetan Buddhists, reportedly includes 17 members, nine of whom are CCP cadres. Those officials maintain control of key decisions within the monastery, including decisions about security, finance, property, and the admission of new monks.

The CCP's prohibition of religious faith among its members means that few openly practicing Tibetan Buddhist religious figures hold direct access to political decision-making power. In 2007 (the most recent year for which official data are available), Tibetan religious figures held approximately 615 out of some 30,000 positions in provincial and lower-level People's Congresses (PCs) or in committees of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in the TAR. The CPPCC is a political advisory body composed of representatives drawn from China's various political parties, religious groups, and other organizations. Although CCP cadres are not permitted to practice religion, Tibetan members of local PCs and CPPCCs are permitted to practice Buddhism. For example, the government-recognized 11th Panchen Lama Gyaltzen Norbu, who is distinct from the Dalai Lama-recognized 11th Panchen Lama, Gedun Choekyi Nyima, is the vice president of the Buddhist Association of China and a member of the CPPCC. The TAR People's Political Consultative Conference made the 7th Reting

Rinpoche, who is the abbot of Reting Monastery, a member in January.

The government also continues to regulate Tibetan religious traditions. Regulations issued by SARA codify government control over the selection of Tibetan religious leaders, including reincarnate lamas. These regulations stipulate city governments and higher-level political entities may deny permission for a lama to be recognized as a reincarnate. Provincial or higher-level governments must approve reincarnations, and the State Council has the right to deny the recognition of reincarnations of high lamas of "especially great influence," often referred to by the Chinese term "Living Buddhas." The regulations also state no foreign organization or individual may interfere in the selection of reincarnate lamas and all reincarnate lamas must be reborn within China. The government maintains a registry of officially recognized reincarnate lamas.

Within the TAR, regulations issued by SARA assert state control over all aspects of Tibetan Buddhism, including religious groups, venues, and personnel. The TAR government has the right to deny any individual's application to take up religious orders. The regulations also require monks and nuns to obtain permission from county-level religious affairs officials in both the originating and receiving counties before traveling to other prefectures or county-level cities within the TAR to "practice their religion," engage in religious activities, study, or teach. Since 2011, Tibetan autonomous prefectures outside of the TAR have formulated similar regulations.

The restrictions on movement hinder a key component of religious education within Tibetan Buddhism calling for nuns and monks to visit different monasteries and religious sites to receive specialized training from experts in theological traditions. Such restrictions sometimes also apply to monks and nuns seeking to visit monasteries within their home counties for study or teaching. Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns have stated these restrictions have damaged and fragmented the quality of monastic education.

TAR regulations also give the government formal control over the building and management of religious structures and require monasteries to obtain official permission to hold large-scale religious gatherings. The TAR maintains tight government control over the use of Tibetan Buddhist religious relics and declares the relics, as well as the religious buildings and institutions themselves, to be state property.

Government Practices

The government's respect for and protection of religious freedom in the TAR and other Tibetan areas were poor. There were numerous and severe government actions affecting religious freedom, including incarceration of people due to their religious practice and three reports of deaths at the hands of the police or while in police custody. Two previously arrested people were sentenced to death, and a monk was shot in the head during a police crackdown.

During President Xi Jinping's first year in office and particularly around sensitive anniversaries, authorities across the Tibetan Plateau continued to enforce security measures that severely restricted religious freedoms. Repression was severe throughout the year and increased around politically and religiously sensitive anniversaries and events, including the 15-day observance of Tibetan New Year; a period of central leadership transition that commenced in March; the observance of "Serf Emancipation Day" on March 28; the Dalai Lama's birthday on July 6; and the celebration of China's National Day on October 1. During the fifth anniversary of violent protests across Tibetan areas in March it became difficult for Tibetans living outside the TAR to enter it.

According to Phayul.com, a website maintained by Tibetan exiles, on July 6, security forces used tear gas and live ammunition to disperse a crowd of monks, nuns, and laypersons gathered in Daofu (Tawu) County, Ganzi (Kardze) TAP, Sichuan Province, to mark the Dalai Lama's 78th birthday. Security forces reportedly shot one monk, Tashi Sonam, in the head and injured other monks. Exile groups initially reported Tashi Sonam had been hospitalized in critical condition, but his subsequent condition was

unknown.

Official intimidation was often used to compel acquiescence with government regulations and to attempt to reduce the likelihood of anti-government demonstrations, projecting an image of stability and the appearance of popular support. At various times monasteries in the TAR and other Tibetan areas were surrounded by security forces. Police detained students, monks, laypersons, and others in many Tibetan areas who called for freedom, human rights, and religious liberty, or who expressed support for the Dalai Lama or solidarity with individuals who had self-immolated. On May 14, Phayul.com reported Chinese police in the TAR on April 28 had beaten to death Kaldo, a former monk at the Chamdo Monastery who went by only one name, after he was detained for possessing recordings of speeches by the Dalai Lama.

On December 19, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, an NGO based in India, reported that monk Ngawang Jampel died while in police custody. According to the center, Ngawang Jampel was detained in Lhasa on November 23, with two other monks. The three monks, who resided at the Tarmoe Monastery in Biru (Driru) County, Naqu (Nagchu) Prefecture, TAR, had traveled to Lhasa on vacation, and Ngawang Jampel was reportedly healthy when he left his monastery. According to the center, public security officers warned Ngawang Jampel's family not to speak publicly about the death. The condition and location of the other two monks remained unknown.

In January the Intermediate People's Court of Aba (Ngaba), Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, sentenced Lobsang Konchok, a monk from Kirti Monastery, to "death with a two-year reprieve." (A "death sentence with reprieve" means a prisoner can avoid execution, but remains in prison, usually for life, if he or she is judged to be sufficiently reformed after the designated reprieve period.) The court sentenced his nephew, Lobsang Tsering, to 10 years in prison. Both were convicted of "intentional homicide" for "inciting and coercing eight people to self-immolate, resulting in three deaths," according to a report by the official Xinhua News Agency. Also in January Xinhua reported officials had detained seven Tibetans in connection with the October 6, 2012, self-immolation by Sanggya Gyatso in Hezuo (Tsoe) TAP, Gansu Province. In April a court in Huangnan (Malho) TAP, Qinghai Province, sentenced four Tibetans to up to six years' imprisonment for inciting "separatism" by sharing information about self-immolations with domestic and overseas groups. In August the Intermediate People's Court of Aba (Ngaba) Prefecture, Sichuan Province, sentenced Dolma Kyab (also known as Droma Gya) to death for allegedly killing his wife, Kunchok Wangmo, and burning her body to make it look as if she had self-immolated, according to official Chinese media reports. At the time of her death in March, Radio Free Asia and exile groups reported that Kunchok Wangmo had self-immolated as an act of protest.

Tibetan monks, nuns, and laypersons continued to engage in self-immolation, often at or near monasteries and usually resulting in death, as a protest against government policies. During the year at least 26 Tibetans reportedly self-immolated, including laypersons and Tibetan Buddhist clergy, a significantly smaller number 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.

Prior to March 2012, all of the reported self-immolators were current or former monks or nuns. As highlighted in the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China 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. This trend continued in 2013, with only 10 of the 26 self-immolators being monks or nuns. During the year self-immolators reportedly continued to see their act as a protest against political and religious oppression. Many self-immolators, including a large number of the laypersons, were reported to have been clutching photos of the Dalai Lama and calling for religious freedom and the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet as they set themselves on fire. 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 self-immolating.

Some experts believe the declining number of reported self-immolations was due to tightened controls by authorities. A December 2012 editorial in the *Gansu Daily*, an online news site, noted 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 criminalized various activities associated with self-immolation, including "organizing, plotting, inciting, compelling, luring, instigating, or helping others to commit self-immolation," each of which could be prosecuted as "intentional homicide." Using the *Opinion*, local authorities prosecuted and imprisoned an unknown number of Tibetans who authorities claimed had aided or instigated self-immolations. In February official media reported nearly 90 arrests of individuals linked to self-immolators in Qinghai and Gansu provinces.

Authorities also took measures to limit news of self-immolations from spreading within Tibetan communities and beyond. In numerous cases following self-immolations, officials shut down or restricted local access to the internet and cellular phone services, according to reports. In March citizens of Aba (Ngaba) Prefecture, Sichuan Province, reported their internet service had been blocked and they were unable to send or receive messages using their cell phones. Many residents believed the government had blocked the services to keep them from spreading news of self-immolations.

In some self-immolation cases, security personnel also reportedly beat, kicked, or otherwise physically abused individuals as they burned. There were no reported arrests in a case brought to light by video footage obtained by the U.S. NGO International Campaign for Tibet showing armed police kicking former Andu monk Losang Jamyang after he set himself on fire on the main street of Aba County Town, Aba (Ngaba) Prefecture, on January 14, 2012. When local Tibetans gathered, police reportedly fired into the crowd, killing one woman and injuring several others. Losang Jamyang died a few days later.

Authorities continued to enforce particularly severe restrictions at Kirti Monastery in Sichuan Province's Aba (Ngaba) Prefecture, where in March 2011, up to 1,000 residents protested the violent beating by police of Kirti monk Phuntsog (who used a single name). Security forces removed hundreds of monks from the monastery and forced others to return to their hometowns. At least two monks affiliated with Kirti Monastery, which has several branch monasteries, self-immolated during the year.

The Tibet Post, a newspaper run from India, reported July 8 that three Tibetan monks from Wonpo Monastery in Shiqu (Sershul) County, Ganzi (Kardze) Prefecture, Sichuan Province, who were detained in late 2012, were sentenced to prison. Sonam Choedar and Sonam Gonpo, both 22 years old, received four-year sentences. The third monk, also named Choedar, received a one-year sentence. Authorities detained the three monks during a crackdown after local Tibetans pulled down a Chinese flag and distributed leaflets calling for freedom.

According to a July 16, 2012, Phayul.com report, police stopped Pema Norbu, a monk from Lhopu Monastery in Changdu (Chamdo) Prefecture, TAR, at a checkpoint and beat him to death. No information about administrative or criminal investigations was reported after his death.

There was no reported investigation into the January 23, 2012 use of force by security forces in Luhuo (Draggo) County, Ganzi (Kardze) TAP, Sichuan Province. In that incident police fired at a crowd of protesters, wounding at least 32 and killing at least one -- Norpa Yonten, a 49-year-old layperson -- according to overseas media and human rights groups. According to some reports, the protesters were demonstrating against the arbitrary detention of Tibetans and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet as well as for additional self-immolations if Tibetans' concerns were ignored. According to a report published by Phayul.com, Tsering Gyaltsen, a monk from Draggo Monastery in Luhuo County, died from injuries sustained after being beaten by police who had arrested him on allegations of participating in the January 2012 protest. Ganzi (Kardze) TAP Party Secretary Hu Changsheng visited Draggo Monastery in February 2013, and

told officials and senior monks not to discuss the cases of four monks reportedly sentenced to prison terms of between five and seven years for their alleged participation in the January protest.

According to contacts in Yajiang (Nyagchuka) County, Ganzi (Kardze) TAP, Sichuan Province, prominent Buddhist figure Rinpoche Tenzin Delek, who was sentenced to life in prison in 2002 on separatism, firearms, and explosives charges he denied, was suffering from heart disease and circulatory problems. According to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, four villagers and Rinpoche Tenzin Delek's sister, Donkar Lhamo, traveled to Beijing in early July to petition the central government for his release. Security officials from Yajiang detained the four villagers for several weeks. According to the group, the petition did not receive a substantive response.

According to contacts and media reports, in August authorities reportedly banned all religious activities at the Shag Rongpo Monastery in Naqu (Nagchu) County, TAR, and expelled resident monks for alleged links with the Dalai Lama. In September authorities arrested 50 Tibetans in the Shag Rongpo area after they protested against government interference at the monastery. Nine of the 50 were identified: Lobsang Tsering, 27; Dhunghuk, 26; Dagyal, 35; Karma, 31; Gyalhuk, 28; Gyalwa, 29; Sichoe, 39; Choedhar, 27; and Jampa, 21.

On August 2, authorities in Changdu (Chamdo) Prefecture, TAR, reportedly sentenced Namsay Sonam, the administrator of Karma Monastery, and monks Dhondup Gyaltsen and Rabsel (who uses only one name) to two and a half years' imprisonment on allegations of providing protection to criminals. According to Phayul.com, the three were arrested in October 2012 for hanging anti-government posters on and near government buildings.

Limited access to information about prisoners and prisons made it difficult to ascertain the exact number of Tibetan prisoners of religious conscience, determine the charges brought against them, or assess the extent and severity of abuses they had suffered.

The Congressional-Executive Commission on China Political Prisoner Database (PPD) contained records of 613 Tibetan political prisoners who had been detained by the end of 2013 and who were believed or presumed to remain detained or imprisoned.

Of the 613 political prisoners, 594 were detained on or after March 10, 2008, the start of a wave of political protests that spread across the Tibetan areas of China. Of those 594 detainees and prisoners, 259 were held in Sichuan Province, 154 in the TAR, 115 in Qinghai Province, 65 in Gansu Province, and 1 in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, according to PPD information. Males accounted for 88 percent (520 cases), females made up 8 percent (48 cases), and gender information was unavailable for 4 percent (26 cases). Tibetan Buddhist monks, nuns, and teachers made up 48 percent (283 cases) of the 594.

Sentence information available in the PPD for 194 of the 594 cases from March 10, 2008 onward showed 188 fixed-term sentences ranging in length from 1.5 years to 20 years (average 6 years and 3 months), and six sentences of life imprisonment or death with a two-year reprieve (usually commuted to life imprisonment if a prisoner committed no new "crimes"). Of the 194 cases with known sentences, 43 percent (83 cases) were Tibetan Buddhist monks, nuns, or teachers.

An unknown number of Tibetans were detained, arrested, and/or sentenced as a result of their religious activity. Many prisoners were held in extrajudicial reeducation through labor (RTL) prisons and never appeared in public court. At the conclusion of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CCP Central Committee in November, the Communist Party announced its intention to abolish RTL, and the National People's Congress Standing Committee subsequently said the system would be dismantled effective January 1, 2014. Amnesty International, however, published a report in December saying many RTL detention centers were being surreptitiously replaced by other forms of extrajudicial detention.

In Tibetan areas outside the TAR, provincial, prefectural, county, and local governments have stationed CCP cadres in, and established police stations or security offices on the premises of, or adjacent to, many monasteries. On August 27, the government of Tianjun (Temchen) County in Haixi (Tsonub) TAP, Qinghai Province, announced it had established MGWGs in seven monasteries. The government also stated one of these groups had removed 23 novice monks under the age of 18 to attend government schools.

The CCP continued to forbid its members from participating in religious activities. In June Zhu Weiqun, Director General of the Ethnic Affairs Committee of China's national CPPCC, stated party members, and particularly party members whose work involves religious issues, "must not be allowed to have religious faith."

In general controls were particularly tight at monasteries. Authorities often hindered Tibetan Buddhist monasteries from delivering the religious, educational, and medical services they traditionally provided to their communities or from carrying out environmental protection, a traditional element of both religious and conservation practice.

The government continued to exercise its authority over the approval of reincarnations of Tibetan Buddhist lamas and the supervision of their education. Authorities also often publicly associated Tibetan Buddhist monasteries with "separatism" and pro-independence activism and characterized disagreement with government religious policies as "seditious behavior."

In March authorities reportedly told many Tibetans who had attended a 2012 Buddhist teaching conference convened in India by the Dalai Lama that they could no longer leave their home counties and were required to report to their local police bureaus on a regular basis. Although many of the attendees had traveled to India legally, officials seized their passports.

Although authorities permitted some traditional religious ceremonies and practices, including public manifestations of religious belief, they rigorously confined most religious activities to officially designated places of worship, often restricted or canceled religious festivals, at times forbade monks from traveling to villages to conduct religious ceremonies, and maintained tight control over the activities of religious leaders and religious gatherings of laypeople. The government suppressed religious activities it viewed as vehicles for political dissent or advocacy of Tibetan independence.

In July authorities in Hainan (Tsolho) TAP, Qinghai Province, canceled the Kalachakra (Wheel of Time) initiation ceremony, which had attracted more than a thousand Tibetan and Chinese Buddhists in previous years, according to Radio Free Asia. No official statement was given as to why the ceremony was canceled.

In early August over 1,000 Chinese police and security personnel were dispatched to oversee the annual Shoton Festival at Drepung monastery in Lhasa. Security scanners were placed at the entrance to the monastery, and Tibetans who entered were subjected to extensive checks, according to International Campaign for Tibet. The Shoton Festival is a traditional celebration in which lay people offer yogurt to monks who have completed their annual meditation retreats.

Government officials and students in Lhasa reportedly were told they would be punished if surveillance cameras showed they had participated in celebrations in monasteries and other religious sites during Sago Dawa, which commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha. As a result, many TAR officials, their family members, and students reportedly traveled to Tibetan areas outside of the TAR to participate in religious activities.

In March officials in Tibetan areas in Sichuan Province and parts of Qinghai Province were reportedly warned not to participate in religious activities, but the overall implementation of the order was less strict than in the TAR, and most students were

allowed to visit monasteries after school hours or during holidays.

"Patriotic education" campaigns, in which authorities forced monks and nuns to participate in "legal education," denounce the Dalai Lama, study materials praising the leadership of the CCP and the socialist system, and express allegiance to the government-recognized 11th Panchen Lama, were carried out periodically at many monasteries and nunneries across the Tibetan Plateau. Many monks and nuns reported that party and government activities, including "patriotic education" campaigns and "legal education" campaigns, detracted from their religious studies; some fled their monasteries and nunneries because they faced expulsion for refusing to attend the education sessions and participate in forced denunciations of the Dalai Lama. The implementation of "patriotic education," coupled with strengthened controls over religious practice, including the permanent installation at many monasteries and nunneries of party and public security officials, were said by many observers to be among the primary sources of discontent among Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns, and the impetus behind some of the self-immolations. Senior monks at some monasteries outside of the TAR said they had reached informal agreements with local officials that resident monks would not stage protests or commit self-immolation as long as the government adopted a hands-off approach to the management of their monasteries.

The number of Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns in monasteries and nunneries fluctuated significantly, due in part to religious personnel leaving their monasteries and nunneries to avoid government-imposed "patriotic education" and "legal education" campaigns, the forced denunciations of the Dalai Lama, and other acts they felt would constitute a betrayal of their religious beliefs. Authorities in the TAR and some other Tibetan areas tightened enforcement of longstanding regulations forbidding monasteries and nunneries from accepting individuals under the age of 18 for training. Contacts reported officials in Changdu (Chamdo) Prefecture, TAR, and in Tibetan areas of Sichuan Province occasionally forced novice monks and nuns younger than 18, unregistered monks and nuns, and monks and nuns who came from other areas to leave their monasteries and nunneries. Nevertheless, monasteries and nunneries in some areas routinely accepted minors and unregistered monks and nuns, including from distant areas.

The government prohibited monasteries from operating schools, although some outside of the TAR did so. Children were sometimes forcibly removed from schools attached to monasteries and enrolled in public schools or provided no alternative arrangements, according to local contacts. Local authorities continuously pressured parents, especially those who were CCP members or government employees, to withdraw their own children, or the children of their relatives, from monasteries in their hometowns, from private schools attached to monasteries, or from Tibetan schools in India. In some cases, local authorities warned parents who worked for the government about possible demotion, cancellation of loans, and cancellation of their children's identity documents if they sent their children to monastic schools or to Tibetan schools in India.

Although some government officials stated there was no law against possessing or displaying pictures of the Dalai Lama, multiple sources reported that open veneration of the Dalai Lama remained prohibited in almost all areas and that officials, many of whom considered the images to be symbols of opposition to the CCP and the state, had removed pictures of the Dalai Lama from monasteries and private homes. According to local contacts, officials in Tongren (Rebkong) County, Huangnan (Malho) TAP, Qinghai Province, confiscated photos of the Dalai Lama from restaurants, shops, and private homes in August. The government also continued to ban pictures of Gedun Choekyi Nyima, whom the Dalai Lama and the overwhelming majority of Tibetan Buddhists recognize as the 11th Panchen Lama, in accordance with a regulation stating "religious personnel and religious citizens may not distribute books, pictures, or other materials that harm the unity of the nationalities or endanger state security." Some officials deemed photos of and books by or about the Dalai Lama or Gedun Choekyi Nyima to violate this ban.

Officials in Qinghai Province reportedly announced at a June meeting that residents of

some parts of the province would be allowed to openly display images of the Dalai Lama and not be required to denounce the Tibetan spiritual leader. SARA, however, quickly refuted the reports in a written statement sent to foreign media outlets on June 28, announcing its policy toward the "Dalai Clique" was clear and consistent and had not changed. In June Hong Kong's Asia Week magazine published an interview with Jin Wei, the Director of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Research Office at Beijing's Central Party School, in which Jin stated "the best way to solve the Dalai Lama issue and the Tibet-related issues" would be to resume direct talks with the Dalai Lama's office.

Despite the de facto ban on images of the Dalai Lama, many Tibetans continued to own and privately display photos of the Dalai Lama and of Gedun Choekyi Nyima in their homes, in lockets, and on cellular telephones. The ability of Tibetans to display the Dalai Lama's picture varied regionally and with the political climate. In Tibetan areas outside the TAR, visitors saw pictures of the Dalai Lama prominently displayed in private homes, shops, and monasteries, although monks reported they would temporarily remove such photos during inspections by officials from the local religious affairs bureau or other agencies.

Government officials continued to publicly denigrate the Dalai Lama and accused the "Dalai Clique" and other outside forces of instigating Tibetan self-immolations, alleging they were attempts to split China. On March 8, senior leaders of the TAR asserted that "self-immolations were related to the Dalai Clique and foreign forces." On May 16, China Central Television, which is under the direct leadership of China's State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, released a "special program" in Chinese, English, French, Spanish, Arabic, and Russian, arguing the "Dalai Clique" was inciting self-immolations. During a visit to Tibetan areas in Gansu Province in July, Yu Zhengsheng, a member of the CCP Politburo Standing Committee and Chairman of the CPPCC, stated that "for the sake of national unity and the development of stability in Tibetan regions, we must take a clear-cut stand and deepen the struggle against the Dalai Clique."

Authorities in the TAR continued to prohibit the registration of children's names that included parts of the Dalai Lama's name or names included on a list blessed by the Dalai Lama.

China further strengthened controls along its borders, and Tibetans encountered substantial difficulties in traveling to India via Nepal for religious and other purposes. Many Tibetans, including monks, nuns, and laypersons, sought to travel to India for religious purposes, including to seek audiences with the Dalai Lama, an important rite for Tibetan Buddhists, or to continue their studies with key Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders and teachers. In many cases Public Security Bureau officials refused to approve the passport applications of Tibetans. This was particularly true for Tibetan Buddhist religious personnel. Citizens from other ethnic groups received passports from the same offices without undue delay. Some Tibetans attributed the passport restrictions to an official effort to hinder travel for religious purposes.

There were instances in which authorities confiscated previously issued passports from Tibetans. In other cases prospective travelers were able to obtain passports only after paying substantial bribes to local officials, or after promising not to travel to India or criticize the Chinese government or CCP while overseas. Sources reported the government had increased patrols along its border to prevent Tibetans from crossing the frontier without permission. Some sources stated the Chinese government had exerted pressure on the governments of neighboring countries to forcibly return Tibetan refugees.

The traditional monastic system suffered because many top Buddhist teachers remained in exile in India and elsewhere, older teachers were not replaced, educated young monks were not promoted due to lack of political credentials, and those who remained in Tibetan areas outside the TAR had difficulty securing permission to teach in other parts of China, abroad, or within the TAR. Many monks expelled from their TAR monasteries after the March 2008 Lhasa riots had still not returned, and some reported

they had been prevented from joining new monasteries. The heads of most major schools of Tibetan Buddhism -- including the Karmapa, Sakya Trizin, Rinpoche Taklung Tsetrul, and Gyalwa Menri Trizin -- all resided in exile.

Authorities closely supervised the education of many, but not all, young reincarnate lamas. In a major deviation from traditional custom, government officials, rather than religious leaders, managed the selection of their religious and lay tutors in the TAR and some other Tibetan areas.

In recent years several large monasteries began to use funds from the sale of entrance tickets or pilgrims' donations -- and, in some cases, from monastery-run hotels, shops, and restaurants -- for purposes other than support for monks engaged in full-time religious study, as such funds are intended to be used, in accordance with the government policy of monastery self-sufficiency. Although local government policies designed to attract tourists to religious sites provided some monasteries with extra income, such activities also reportedly interfered with and deflected time and energy from the monasteries' provision of traditional services, such as religious instruction and education, community medical care, and the performance of religious rites and ceremonies for the local Tibetan community.

There were reports government officials had denied some spiritual leaders permission to build or operate religious institutions in some rural areas. Officials in some areas contended these religious venues drained local resources and served as a conduit for political infiltration by the Tibetan exile community. In other areas, however, the government restored monastic buildings, although often with the goal of promoting tourism and boosting revenue.

Security forces continued to block access to and from important monasteries, including those in the Lhasa area of the TAR and in Sichuan Province's Aba (Ngaba) Prefecture and Ganzi (Kardze) TAP. A heavy police presence within and surrounding some monasteries restricted the movement of monks and prevented numerous "unauthorized" visits, including by foreign diplomats, journalists, and other observers.

According to policy, government-subsidized housing units in Tibetan areas were constructed at new village sites near county government seats or along major roads, which often resulted in there being no nearby monasteries where newly resettled villagers could worship. Traditionally, Tibetan villages were clustered around monasteries, which provided religious and other services to members of the community. Many Tibetans saw such measures as illustrative of CCP and government efforts to dilute religious belief and weaken the ties between monasteries and communities. In some cases Tibetans were able to construct new villages near monasteries after negotiating with the local authorities.

The whereabouts of Gedun Choekyi Nyima remained unknown. The government ignored requests by international observers to visit Gedun Choekyi Nyima, who turned 24 on April 25, and continued to maintain his identification as the 11th Panchen Lama was "illegal." The government continued to insist that Gyaltsen Norbu, whom it selected in 1995, was the Panchen Lama's true reincarnation. According to numerous Tibetan Buddhist monks and scholars in China, United Front Work Department and Religious Affairs Bureau officials frequently pressured monks and laypeople, including government officials, to attend sessions presided over by Gyaltsen Norbu. For example, when Gyaltsen Norbu visited the TAR in October, monks and villagers were reportedly ordered to greet him. According to a People's Daily article, CPPCC Chairman Yu Zhengsheng asked Gyaltsen Norbu at an April 12 meeting to play a more active role in safeguarding the unification of the motherland and promoting ethnic unity.

The government severely restricted contact between several important reincarnate lamas and the outside world. For example, the 11th Rinpoche Pawo, whom the 17th Karmapa recognized in 1994, reportedly remained under official supervision at Nenang Monastery in the TAR. According to some Buddhist scholars, the Rinpoche Pawo was allowed to travel to some major cities to study Chinese but was not allowed to travel

outside of China or to Hong Kong.

Sources reported security personnel targeted individuals in monastic attire, particularly those from Naqu (Nagchu Prefecture), TAR, and Tibetan areas outside of the TAR, for arbitrary questioning and other forms of harassment on the streets of Lhasa and other cities and towns. Many Tibetan monks and nuns chose to wear non-religious garb to avoid such harassment when traveling outside their monasteries and around China.

Several Christians in Lhasa reported officials had not significantly interfered with small house churches since 2011. The Lhasa-based Christians said both foreigners and TAR government officials had participated in services at Christian house churches.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

There were reports of societal discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Since ethnicity and religion are tightly intertwined for many Tibetan Buddhists, however, it was sometimes difficult to categorize incidents solely as ethnic or religious intolerance. Tibetans, particularly those who wore traditional and religious attire, regularly reported incidents in which they were denied hotel rooms, avoided by taxis, and/or discriminated against in employment opportunities or business transactions.

Many ethnic Han Buddhists were interested in Tibetan Buddhism and donated money to Tibetan monasteries and nunneries. Tibetan Buddhist monks frequently visited Chinese cities to provide religious instruction to ethnic Han Buddhists. In addition, a growing number of ethnic Han Buddhists visited Tibetan monasteries, although officials sometimes imposed restrictions that made it difficult for ethnic Han Buddhists to conduct long-term study at many monasteries in ethnic Tibetan areas.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. government, including the Department of State, the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and the U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu, made a sustained and concerted effort to encourage greater religious freedom in Tibetan areas. U.S. officials at the most senior levels urged China to ease restrictions on religious freedom, including repressive policies in Tibetan areas. U.S. officials repeatedly raised Tibetan religious freedom issues in public remarks and with Chinese government counterparts at multiple levels, including expressing concern for, and seeking further information about, individual cases and incidents of religious persecution and discrimination. U.S. officials also raised these concerns and discussed these issues at length and in depth during the U.S.-China Human Rights Dialogue held in Kunming, Yunnan Province, July 30-31.

Speaking at a press conference in Beijing August 2, the Acting Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor expressed "deep concern about China's stepped-up attempts to silence dissent and tighten controls over Tibetans," stated that "policies ostensibly designed to maintain stability are counterproductive when they deny Chinese citizens their universal rights and fundamental freedoms," and urged the Chinese government to "engage in substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives without preconditions."

U.S. diplomatic personnel maintained contact with a wide range of religious leaders and practitioners in Tibetan areas to monitor the status of religious freedom, although travel and other restrictions made it difficult to visit and communicate with these individuals. U.S. diplomatic personnel from the embassy and the Consulate General in Chengdu made several trips throughout the year to visit monasteries and nunneries in Sichuan, Qinghai, and Yunnan Provinces, including Sichuan's Aba (Ngaba) Prefecture and Ganzi (Kardze) TAP, although Chinese officials sometimes prevented travel to Tibetan areas for which permission was not officially required.

U.S. government officials submitted more than 16 requests for diplomatic access to the TAR between May 2011 and November 2013, but only two were granted (one related to the provision of emergency consular assistance to Americans involved in a vehicle

crash). In June 2013, the Ambassador led the first official U.S. delegation to the TAR in more than two years. During the trip, which was tightly controlled and limited to Lhasa and nearby areas, the Ambassador raised concerns about religious freedom at meetings with TAR Party Secretary Chen Quanguo and Lhasa Party Secretary Qi Zhala. He also visited several major Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and a nunnery. U.S. and other foreign diplomats who lawfully traveled in some Tibetan areas outside the TAR, such as Sichuan Province's Garze (Kardze) TAP and Aba (Ngaba) Province, were frequently approached by local police and 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.

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