V. Tibet

Status of Negotiations Between the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama or His Representatives

There has been no formal dialogue between the Dalai Lama’s representatives and Chinese Communist Party and government officials since the ninth round of dialogue was held in January 2010.1 In its 2016 Report on Tibet Negotiations, the U.S. State Department reiterated the long-standing position of the U.S. Government that promoting substantive dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives is an “important U.S. foreign policy objective” and that “resumption of dialogue and steps to redress Tibetan grievances are critical to reducing the continuing high tensions between Tibetans and Chinese authorities.”2 On February 3, 2017, the Party-run Global Times reported that Zhu Weiqun, Chairperson of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and a former senior Party official, said the Chinese government would not engage in dialogue with what Zhu referred to as an “illegal group” whose aim is to split China.3

Reincarnation and the 14th Dalai Lama

The Chinese central government maintains that only it has the right to decide the Dalai Lama’s successor.4 The 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, who reached the age of 82 in July 2017,5 has said “the person who reincarnates has sole legitimate authority over where and how he or she takes rebirth and how that reincarnation is to be recognized.”6 The issue of the current Dalai Lama’s reincarnation garnered substantial attention during this reporting year, prompted in part by the Dalai Lama’s travel to two places with significant historical ties to Tibetan Buddhism—Mongolia in November 2016, and Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, India, in April 2017—and speculation that the Dalai Lama may be exploring possible places for his reincarnation.7

While in Tawang, where the Dalai Lama gave teachings to 50,000 people, he said it was “nonsense” for the Chinese government to claim that it has the right to decide his successor.8 The Dalai Lama reiterated that whether the institution of the Dalai Lama is still relevant, or if he should be the last Dalai Lama, is something for the Tibetan people to decide.9 He said he expects not only Tibetan refugees, but also others across the Himalayan region, including Tawang, to provide input into the decision regarding whether the institution should continue.10 On August 9, 2017, during a lecture in India, the Dalai Lama said that “[s]ome of the preparation for the future of the Dalai Lama institution will begin in the next one or two years.”11 He further stated that people in India and Mongolia “also have . . . responsibility” in this matter.12

Chinese authorities continued to expand the public profile of their chosen Panchen Lama, 27-year-old Gyaltse Norbu, whom Party and government officials selected as the 11th Panchen Lama in 1995, shortly after declaring the Dalai Lama’s recognition of then six-year-old Gedun Choekyi Nyima to be “illegal and invalid.”13 According to observers, Gyaltse Norbu is likely to play
a significant role in the Party and government’s selection of their endorsed successor to the 14th Dalai Lama. In August 2016, the Global Times stated that as Gyaltse Norbu becomes more involved in religious, political, and social affairs, he “is expected to mitigate” the influence of the Dalai Lama. Chinese authorities abducted Gedun Choekyi Nyima and his parents on May 17, 1995, three days after the Dalai Lama recognized him as the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama, and have refused to permit an independent expert to visit him. The Panchen Lama and his family’s whereabouts remain unknown.

In August 2016, for the first time, the U.S. State Department addressed the Dalai Lama’s reincarnation in its annual Report on Tibet Negotiations, stating that as a matter of the “universally recognized right of religious freedom,” the decision regarding the Dalai Lama’s succession or reincarnation “must be reserved to the current Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhist leaders, and the Tibetan people.”

Despite the harsh measures that the Chinese government and Party have taken to try to undermine the stature of the Dalai Lama in the eyes of Tibetans, Tibetan Buddhists continue to revere him as their spiritual leader and take great risks to access his teachings, possess an image of him, or express their devotion in other ways. In December 2016, the Aba Intermediate People’s Court in Ma’erkang (Barkham) county, Aba (Ngaba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture (T&QAP), Sichuan province, reportedly sentenced at least eight Tibetans in Aba (Ngaba) county, to prison terms ranging from 5 to 14 years for involvement in activities relating to the celebration of the Dalai Lama’s 80th birthday in July 2015, including 48-year-old Bonkho Kyi, whom authorities sentenced to 7 years in prison reportedly for organizing a public picnic to celebrate the Dalai Lama’s birthday.

Security, Surveillance, and Party Policy

The government and Party continued implementing repressive policies in Tibetan autonomous areas of China through the use of extensive and intrusive surveillance, stringent measures that restrict Tibetans’ fundamental rights, and pervasive displays of police and military force, in what U.K.-based professor Tsering Topgyal has described as the “securitization” of the region, Tibetan Buddhism, and Tibetan culture. Chinese officials in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) announced in November 2016 that they were again extending a grassroots surveillance program, first launched in October 2011, which involves the deployment of tens of thousands of cadres to rural areas to monitor local Tibetans and deepen the Party’s penetration into villages, religious institutions, and neighborhoods, stating that as a aim of preserving “social stability” and fostering support for the Party. Officials have also reportedly deployed similar methods in Tibetan areas of Sichuan, Qinghai, and Gansu provinces.

At various times during the year, the government and Party continued to use large-scale displays of military and security forces throughout Tibetan areas of China, reportedly unlinked to any actual or tangible threat of violence, which international human rights organizations described as an attempt to intimidate Tibet-
Authorities intensified the security presence during major religious festivals and "sensitive" dates, including the entire month of March 2017.26

New high-level political appointments in the TAR are unlikely to lead to any changes in current policies or methods of governance.28

In late August 2016, authorities announced that the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee had selected Wu Yingjie—an official linked to previous crackdowns who has spent most of his career in the TAR—to be the new Party Secretary of the TAR.29 In a speech Wu gave the following month, he called for "deepen[ing] the struggle against the Dalai Lama clique," which he described as "the highest priority" of the Party's ethnic affairs work.30 In January 2017, Tibetan official Qizhala (Che Dalha), the former Party secretary of Lhasa municipality, TAR, became the governor of the TAR.31

Chinese authorities continued to denounce the Dalai Lama as a "splittist"32 or "separatist,"33 blaming him and "hostile foreign forces" for "inciting separatism" in Tibetan areas of China,34 despite the fact the Dalai Lama has stated repeatedly that he seeks genuine autonomy for Tibet, not independence.35 In May 2017, the secretary of the TAR's Commission for Discipline Inspection, Wang Yongjun, alleged that some Party officials had donated funds to the Dalai Lama, and thus "severely undermine[d] the Party's fight against separatism."36 State media reported in April 2017 that authorities used polygraph tests to assess the capability and "psychological fitness" of 168 leading cadres (lingdao ganbu) in Ganzi (Kardze) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), an area known as a stronghold of Tibetan identity and culture.37 The International Campaign for Tibet described the use of polygraphs to assess the political loyalty of Party officials as indicative of "an escalation of the [Party's] efforts to assert its dominance" amid "a climate . . . of fear and mistrust" that the Party created.38

Self-Immolations

Self-immolations by Tibetans as a form of protest reportedly focusing on religious and political issues continued during this reporting year.39 As of August 21, 2017, there were 5 known self-immolations in Tibetan autonomous areas of China, 4 of which were confirmed to be fatal, bringing the total number of such self-immolations by Tibetans living in China to 144 since 2009, 127 of which were reportedly fatal.40 This extreme form of protest and expression has become less frequent in recent years, as the Chinese government has continued to impose collective punishment on family members and others close to self-immolators in an apparent effort to deter self-immolations.41 Since 2009, many Tibetan self-immolators have called for the long life of the Dalai Lama, his return from exile, and freedom for Tibet.42

Chinese authorities responded as they have in other self-immolation cases: Officials threatened and detained family members and supporters, attempted to prevent images and videos of the self-immolations from being circulated, and detained those suspected of sharing information.43 As in previous years, self-immolation protesters called for the Dalai Lama’s long life and return, and/or freedom for Tibet.44
On December 8, 2016, 31-year-old father of two Tashi Rabten died after self-immolating in Maqu (Machu) county seat, Gannan (Kanlho) TAP, Gansu province.\textsuperscript{45} Pema Gyaltsen, a 24-year-old unmarried farmer from Xinlong (Nyagrong) county, Ganzi (Kardze) TAP, Sichuan province, self-immolated on March 18, 2017, in Ganzi county seat.\textsuperscript{46} Police reportedly took into custody nearly 200 Tibetan bystanders, some of whom had expressed solidarity with Gyaltsen.\textsuperscript{47} Reports following his self-immolation indicated that it was unclear whether he survived.\textsuperscript{48} Wangchug Tseten, a father of four in his 30s, also from Xinlong, self-immolated in the Ganzi county seat on April 15, 2017.\textsuperscript{49} Authorities reportedly detained five Tibetans in connection with the self-immolation, three for apparently being in possession of Wangchug Tseten’s mobile phone, and two others for allegedly filming his protest.\textsuperscript{50} Wangchug Tseten later died from his injuries.\textsuperscript{51} Chagdor Kyab, a 16-year-old student from Bora township, Gannan, set himself on fire near Bora Monastery on May 2, 2017.\textsuperscript{52} Chinese security forces quickly extinguished the flames and removed Chagdor Kyab from the scene.\textsuperscript{53} In the aftermath of the self-immolation, authorities briefly detained his parents twice, prevented relatives and friends from visiting the family at their home, and barred monks from performing religious rituals for Chagdor Kyab.\textsuperscript{54} He later died from his injuries.\textsuperscript{55} Jamyang Losel, a monk in his early 20s, set fire to himself in Jianzha (Chentsa) county, Huangnan (Malho) TAP, Qinghai province, on May 19, 2017, and died shortly thereafter.\textsuperscript{56} Authorities refused to return his body to his family.\textsuperscript{57}

Religious Freedom for Tibetan Buddhists

The Party and government continued to regulate Tibetan Buddhism and its practices in an effort to strengthen their control over Tibetan Buddhists, with the aim of transforming Tibetan Buddhism, monasteries and nunneries, and monastics into loyal supporters of the Party and country.\textsuperscript{58} One international scholar has described the restrictions and requirements placed on monastics and monasteries as a “pervasive regime of control.”\textsuperscript{59} Among the most significant developments this past year with respect to the right of religious freedom were the demolitions and expulsions at the famous Tibetan Buddhist institutes Larung Gar and Yachen Gar.\textsuperscript{60} [For information on the relevant law relating to religious freedom in China, see Section II—Freedom of Religion—International and Chinese Law on Religious Freedom.]
Demolitions and Expulsions at Two Famous Tibetan Buddhist Institutes

**Larung Gar**

In mid-July 2016, Chinese authorities in Ganzi (Kardze) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), Sichuan province, began the process of demolishing dwellings and expelling monks and nuns at Larung Gar Buddhist Institute, in Seda (Serthar) county, Ganzi TAP. The Seda county government, reportedly operating under instructions from “higher authorities,” mandated that by September 2017, Larung Gar’s occupancy could not exceed 5,000 residents.

In June 2017, a senior abbot at Larung Gar told the community that since 2016, Chinese authorities had expelled “more than 4,828 monks and nuns” and that “4,725 monastic dwellings” had been demolished. Before the expulsions began in 2016, estimates suggested that the population of Larung Gar, one of the world’s largest Buddhist institutes, was at least 10,000, if not higher—comprised not only of Tibetan monks and nuns, but also thousands of Han Chinese practitioners, as well as students from India and Western countries. In March 2017, a senior abbot told the remaining residents: “Those who have left had never wanted to leave. All left against their own wish.” He also urged them not to protest what he described as the “implementation of Chinese government policy” which he said came from “senior levels of government.” Sources reported the expulsions and demolitions caused significant distress and despair within the community, including the suicide of three nuns in protest during the summer of 2016. In addition, Chinese authorities across the TAR subjected monks and nuns expelled from Larung Gar to periods of “patriotic education” lasting from several weeks to six months upon arrival in their home localities, before officials allowed them to return to their family homes.

Official explanations of the measures taken at Larung Gar included concerns about overcrowding, health and safety, and the desire to make a “more orderly, beautiful land.” Some observers believe that Chinese authorities’ purpose in reducing the size of Larung Gar was to contain and control its influence, and to further restrict religious freedom. The popularity of Larung Gar among Han Chinese may also have been a factor. According to the International Campaign for Tibet and the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), the expulsions and demolitions at Larung Gar were also driven by the Chinese government’s plans to increase business and tourism in the area, which would further marginalize the religious community. A Tibetan monastic instructor told a TCHRD source in late July 2017 that “[m]ost of the people who now come to Larung Gar are tourists rather than people who want to practice Buddhism.”
Demolitions and Expulsions at Two Famous Tibetan Buddhist Institutes—Continued

Yachen Gar

Yachen Gar, located in Beiyu (Pelyul) county, Ganzi (Kardze) TAP, Sichuan, had an estimated population of 10,000, comprised mainly of nuns, before expulsions at Yachen Gar began in April 2016. By mid-September 2016, authorities at the institute had expelled as many as 1,000 nuns who originally came from the TAR. Authorities reportedly threatened family members of nuns at Yachen Gar from the TAR with punishment if the nuns did not return to their place of household registration (hukou). The demolition of approximately 200 dwellings to accommodate new curb and sidewalk construction, in addition to other construction projects, indicated that Chinese authorities were preparing Yachen Gar for an influx of tourists. In August 2017, Radio Free Asia reported that demolitions were continuing at Yachen Gar. Chinese officials reportedly ordered the expulsion of 2,000 nuns and monks and the demolition of 2,000 houses by the end of 2017.

Various human rights are implicated in the Chinese government’s demolitions and forced expulsions at the two Buddhist institutes. Six UN special rapporteurs jointly submitted a letter to the Chinese government in November 2016, in which they wrote that “grave concern is expressed over the serious repression of the Buddhist Tibetans’ cultural and religious practices and learning in Larung Gar and Yachen Gar.” The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom described the destruction at Larung Gar as exemplifying the Chinese government’s “desire to eviscerate the teachings and study of Tibetan Buddhism that are integral to the faith.” In addition, by compelling relocation of monks and nuns from Larung Gar and Yachen Gar, Chinese authorities also arguably violated their rights of freedom of residence and movement.

Freedom of Movement

As in previous years, Chinese authorities tightly restricted the freedom of movement of Tibetans, both domestically and internationally, in contravention of international human rights standards. Chinese authorities continued to restrict access to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) for Tibetans not from the TAR. Moreover, in August 2017, the State Council announced that the government would cap the permanent resident population in the central urban areas of Lhasa municipality, TAR, at 500,000 by 2020. According to Chinese census data, in 2010, there were 559,423 permanent residents in Lhasa. In April 2017, authorities reportedly required residents of Xinlong (Nyagrong) county, Ganzi (Kardze) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), Sichuan province, to obtain three different permits—village, township, and county—in order to travel to Ganzi township, the county seat of Ganzi county, Ganzi TAP, after two Tibetans from Xinlong self-immolated there within one month of each other. [For information on international legal standards regarding freedom of movement, see Section II—Freedom of Residence and Movement—International Travel, Domestic Movement.]
Tibet

The Chinese government severely restricts the ability of Tibetans to travel abroad. It is very difficult for Tibetans to obtain passports, and even if obtained, Chinese authorities may easily confiscate or cancel them. Chinese authorities made concerted efforts to prevent an estimated 7,000 Tibetan pilgrims from attending the Kalachakra ceremony and teachings given by the Dalai Lama in Bodh Gaya, India, in January 2017. The International Campaign for Tibet described these efforts as “the most systematic crackdown so far linked to a Dalai Lama’s teaching in exile.”

In October 2016, Chinese authorities began to confiscate Tibetans’ passports and ordered thousands of Tibetans who had already managed to travel to Nepal and India on pilgrimage to return to China. In late November, the Dalai Lama granted a special audience and gave teachings in Dharamsala, India, to over 1,000 Tibetans who were ordered to return to China. Chinese authorities threatened various punishments if pilgrims disobeyed the order to return, including detention and loss of pension and jobs for themselves or their family members; monks were told they would not be permitted to return to their monasteries.

Chinese authorities labeled the Dalai Lama’s Kalachakra “illegal” and reportedly prohibited Tibetans from sharing news or organizing local gatherings related to the teachings. Tibetan sources in Qinghai and Sichuan provinces, nonetheless, told Radio Free Asia that Tibetans were holding small gatherings to pray and to participate in the Kalachakra teachings via the Internet.

Freedom of Expression

Chinese authorities continued to detain and imprison Tibetans for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and opinion, and for engaging in solo peaceful protests. Several representative cases follow.

- In November 2016, a court in Heishui (Trochu) county, Aba (Ngaba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture (T&QAP), Sichuan province, sentenced Lobsang Sonam, a 23-year-old monk from Kirti Monastery, to six years in prison for sharing information and images about Tibet with entities outside of China.
- Sonam Tashi, a 20-year-old resident of Seda (Serthar) county, Ganzi (Kardze) TAP, Sichuan, was detained by police in January 2017 after engaging in a peaceful solo protest during which he called for the long life of the Dalai Lama and freedom for Tibet, while dispersing leaflets as he walked along the street. Police seized him quickly, and his whereabouts are unknown.
- On February 25, 2017, public security officials in Aba county, Aba T&QAP, detained Lobsang Tsultrim, a young Kirti Monastery monk, following his peaceful solo protest calling for the Dalai Lama’s return and freedom for Tibetans. As of August 2017, his condition and whereabouts were unknown.
- Authorities took Gedun, a young villager from Shiqu (Sershul) county, Ganzi TAP, into custody in early March 2017, and reportedly severely beat him for sharing photos of the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan national flag, and essays about the
preservation of the Tibetan language on the messaging service WeChat.\textsuperscript{108}

\textit{Status of Tibetan Culture}

China’s 2016–2020 National Human Rights Action Plan (HRAP) provides both “the cultural rights of ethnic minorities shall be guaranteed” and that “[t]he right of ethnic minorities to learn, use and develop their own spoken and written languages shall be respected and guaranteed,”\textsuperscript{109} echoing provisions of China’s Constitution, the PRC Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law, and the PRC Education Law.\textsuperscript{109} Tibetan culture and language face increasing pressure and marginalization, however, as the Chinese government and Party continue to promote Mandarin Chinese as the main language of instruction in Tibetan areas.\textsuperscript{110} Given the inextricable link between language, culture, and identity,\textsuperscript{111} and the need for Tibetan language in order to access Buddhist texts,\textsuperscript{112} Chinese authorities view Tibetan-language instruction as a potential security issue—a force that could fuel “separatism.”\textsuperscript{113} Public security officials detained Tibetan language rights advocate and entrepreneur Tashi Wangchug\textsuperscript{114} in January 2016 in Yushu (Kyegudo) city, Yushu TAR, Qinghai province, following a November 2015 New York Times report and video of his efforts to advocate for a genuine Tibetan-Mandarin bilingual education system.\textsuperscript{115} Authorities subsequently indicted Tashi Wangchug for “inciting separatism,” and he remains detained awaiting trial.\textsuperscript{116}

Despite the risks, Tibetans continue to organize Tibetan-language literacy groups,\textsuperscript{117} and during this past year, several open letters and essays written by Tibetans appeared online expressing concern about the state of “bilingual education.”\textsuperscript{118} A Washington Post reporter wrote that several Tibetans he spoke with in Lhasa municipality, TAR, in September 2016, expressed unhappiness that young Tibetans study in Mandarin as their primary language of instruction, and study and speak Tibetan as if it were a foreign language.\textsuperscript{119}

\textit{Economic Development and Tourism}

The Chinese government has long held the view that economic development is the key to solidifying its control in Tibet.\textsuperscript{120} The Commission, however, observed no evidence during its 2002–2017 period of reporting that the Party or government solicited systematic or representative input from the Tibetan population on economic development in autonomous Tibetan areas of China.\textsuperscript{121} Much central government investment for development has targeted large-scale infrastructure projects and government administration.\textsuperscript{122} Experts note that Han Chinese have mainly benefited from the job opportunities that these projects have created, because many Tibetans are disadvantaged in competing with Han migrant workers, who generally have higher levels of education as well as requisite Mandarin skills.\textsuperscript{123} In September 2016, a TAR official told a group of foreign reporters that the Chinese government’s goal was to turn Tibet into a “world-class tourism destination.”\textsuperscript{124} Millions of Chinese tourists travel to the TAR each year, and the government is planning to attract more foreign visitors to the TAR.\textsuperscript{125} The pres-
sure placed on Tibetan culture, livelihood, and identity by the influx of Han migrants and tourists is substantial. In April 2017, reports emerged that the Chinese government is considering making the entire Tibetan plateau into a national park, which will be open mainly to tourists, and will impact many Tibetan residents. In July 2017, the China Daily reported that the government would build China’s first Mars simulation base in the Haixi Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai province, and that it would “be turned into a cultural and tourist experience base.”
Notes to Section V—Tibet

1 U.S. Department of State, “Report on Tibet Negotiations, P.L. 107-228 Section 613(b), of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2003,” attached to letter from Julia Frifield, Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, U.S. Department of State, to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 19 August 16.

2 Ibid. See also “US Committed to Tibetan Issue, Says Tillerson,” Agence France-Presse, reproduced in Zee News, 8 May 17; International Campaign for Tibet, “Secretary Tillerson Says He Is Committed To Promoting Dialogue on Tibet and Receiving the Dalai Lama,” 1 February 17. During his confirmation proceedings in the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (SFRC) in January 2017, Rex Tillerson stated if confirmed as Secretary of State he would continue to encourage dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama and/or representatives of Tibet’s “government-in-exile.” International Campaign for Tibet, “Senate Confirms Terry Branstad as U.S. Ambassador To China As He Commits To Urge Chinese Authorities To Ante Up Chances To Hold Talks With The Dalai Lama in Meaningful and Direct Dialogue With the Dalai Lama,” 22 May 17. During Terry Branstad’s confirmation hearing in the SFRC for the position of U.S. Ambassador to China, he committed to “urge Chinese authorities to engage in meaningful and direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama and his representatives without preconditions to lower tensions and resolve differences.”


4 CECC, 2016 Annual Report, 6 October 16, 302.

5 Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, “His Holiness the Dalai Lama Gives Buddhist Teachings to 50,000 in Tawang,” 8 April 17.


7 Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, “His Holiness the Dalai Lama Gives Buddhist Teachings to 50,000 in Tawang,” 8 April 17.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, “His Holiness the Dalai Lama Gives Buddhist Teachings to 50,000 in Tawang,” 8 April 17.


16 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “International Religious Freedom Report for 2015—China (Includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau),” 10 August 16. 29; International Campaign for Tibet, “China Attempts To Legitimize Its Panchen Lama Through a Major Speech as the Real Panchen Lama’s Birthday Approaches,” 21 April 15; “Dalai Lama Rejects Communist Party ‘Brazen Meddling’ in Tibetan Buddhist Reincarnation,” CECC China Human Rights and Rule of Law Update, No. 1, 24 January 12, 3; UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding Observations: China (including Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions), adopted by the Committee at its 108th Meeting (30 September 2005), CRC/C/CHN/CO/2, 24 November 05, paras. 44–45: “The Committee notes the information provided about the Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, but remains concerned that it has not yet been possible to have this information confirmed by an independent expert . . . . In particular, the Committee recommends that the State party: . . . e) allow an independent expert to visit and confirm the well-being of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima while respecting his right to privacy, and that of his parents.” CECC, 2016 Annual Report, 6 October 16, 301.


18 U.S. Department of State, “Report on Tibet Negotiations, P.L. 107-228 Section 613(b), of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2003,” attached to letter from Julia Frifield, Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, U.S. Department of State, to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 19 August 05, 2. For the full text of the U.S. State Department's reports on Tibet negotiations from previous years, see International Campaign for Tibet, “State Department Annual Reports on Tibet,” last visited 15 July 17.


20 Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, “China Jails Tibetans for Celebrating Dalai Lama's Birthday: Nine Tibetans Get Varying Terms of 5 to 14 Years,” 7 December 16. For more information on eight Tibetans from Aba (Ngaba) county sentenced by the same court and on the same date for celebrating the Dalai Lama’s 80th birthday in 2015, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database records 2008-00632 on Taulitrin, 2011-00422 on Lobzang Khedru, 2012-00222 on Lodroe, 2012-00261 on Bonkho Kyi, 2016-00212 on Argya Gya, 2017-00026 on Drugdra, 2017-00027 on Lobsang Gephel, and 2017-00028 on Taulitrin.

21 Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, “China Jails Tibetans for Celebrating Dalai Lama’s Birthday: Nine Tibetans Get Varying Terms of 5 to 14 Years,” 7 December 16. For more information on Bonkho Kyi, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2012-00261.

22 For more information on the Tibetan autonomous areas of China, see CECC, “Special Topic Paper: Tibet 2008–2009,” 12 October 09, 22–24. In China there is 1 provincial-level area of Tibetan autonomy (Tibet Autonomous Region [TAR]), and there are 10 prefec- tural-level areas of Tibetan autonomy and 2 county-level areas of Tibetan autonomy. The area of the TAR (approximately 1.2 million square kilometers), the 10 Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures (TAPs) (approximately 1.02 million square kilometers), and the 2 Tibetan Autonomous Counties (TACs) (approximately 0.019 million square kilometers) totals approximately 2.24 million square kilometers. The 10 TAPs make up approximately 46 percent of the TAR/TAP/TAC total area. Steven Marshall and Susette Cooke, Tibet Outside the TAR: Control, Exploitation and Assimilation: Development With Chinese Characteristics (Washington, DC: Self-published CD–ROM, 1997), Table 7, citing multiple Chinese sources, Table 7 provides the following information. Tibet Autonomous Region (1.2 million square kilometers, or 463,320 square miles). Qinghai province: Haibei (Tsoang) TAP (52,000 square kilometers, or 20,077 square miles), Hainan (Tsolho) TAP (41,634 square kilometers, or 16,375 square miles), and Haizi (Tsorub) Mongol and Tibetan AP (325,787 square kilometers, or 125,788 square miles). Huangnan (Malho) TAP (17,901 square kilometers, or 7,009 square miles), Guoluo (Golog) TAP (78,444 square kilometers, or 30,287 square miles), and Yushu (Yushul) TAP (197,791 square kilometers, or 76,267 square miles). Gansu province: Gannan (Kanlho) TAP (45,000 square kilometers, or 17,374 square miles), and Tianshui (Pari) TAP (7,159 square kilometers, or 2,761 square miles). Sichuan province: Ganzi (Boeiting) TAP (153,870 square kilometers, or 59,409 square miles), Aba (Ngaba) Tibetan and Qiang AP (86,639 square kilometers, or 33,451 square miles), and Muli (Mili) TAP (11,413 square kilometers, or 4,407 square miles). Yunnan province: Dqing (Dechen) TAP (25,870 square kilometers, or 9,916 square miles). The table provides areas in square kilometers. Conversion to square miles uses the formula provided on the website of the U.S. Geological Survey: 1 square kilometer = 0.3861 square mile. For population data, see Tabulation on Nationalities of 2000 Population Census of China [2000 nian renkou pucha zhongguo minzu renkou ziliao], National Bureau of Statistics of China, and Department of Economic Development, State Ethnic Affairs Commission (Beijing: Economic Publishing House, September 2003). Tables 10–1, 19–4. According to China’s 2010 ethnic census data, the total Tibetan population in China was 6,282,187. The Tibetan population of the TAR (approximately 2.72 million), the 10 TAPs (approximately 2.97 million), and the 2 TACs (approximately 0.086 million) totaled approximately 5.87 million Tibetans living in areas of Tibetan autonomy. Approximately 0.09 million Tibetans lived outside of the areas of Tibetan autonomous regions.
Several important and "sensitive" dates and anniversaries occur in March. These include March


Tibetan protests in 2008, as well as March 28, the official “Serfs Emancipation Day,” which marks the 1959 dissolution of the former Tibetan government in Lhasa—a holiday that many Tibetans seek to avoid. Annual intensified security clampdowns often begin at some point in February to include Losar, the Tibetan New Year. “Special Topic Paper: Tibet 2008–2009,” Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 22 October 09, 56–65. March also contains “sensitive” anniversaries specific to certain locations. For example, on March 16, 2008, a peaceful protest that began at Kirti Monastery in Abu (Ngaba) county, Ngaba (Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province, ended in bloodshed after Chinese security forces opened fire, reportedly killing at least 15 Tibetans, and injuring hundreds of others. Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, “Solitary Tibetan Protests Continue in Ngaba To Commemorate 16 March Massacre.” 21 March 17.


“China Says Countering Dalai Lama Is Top Ethnic Priority in Tibet,” Reuters, 30 September 16.

Tsering Chonjom Bhutia, “Does Tibet's New Governor Signal Change?” The Diplomat, 19 January 17. For more background on Qizhala, see International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), “Tibetan Becomes New Lhasa Party Secretary; Updates on Leadership in Tibetan Areas and the Chinese Clenches in Lhasa,” 15 December 2011. ICT notes that prior to Qizhala becoming the Lhasa Party Secretary in November 2011—with the exception of a brief stint as head of the TAR United Front Work Department immediately preceding his being named Lhasa Party Secretary—Qizhala had spent his whole career in Diqing (Dechen) TAP, Yunnan province. As head of Diqing TAP, Qizhala was reportedly “well-regarded” by the local Tibetans.


“China Calls Dalai Lama a ‘Separatist,’ Says He Flied After Failed Armed Rebellion,” Press Trust of India (PTI), reprinted in HinduTimes, 8 April 17. See also “China Calls Dalai Lama’s Kalachakra ‘Illegal,’ Threatens Punishment for Those Taking Part,” Radio Free Asia, 5 January 17. The Commission has observed that the Chinese government appears to use the English terms “splittist” and “separatist” interchangeably as translations of the Chinese term fenle fenz when referring to the Dalai Lama.


40This self-immolation total (144), as of August 21, 2017, does not include the following six self-immolations/burnings (two of which were possibly not self-immolations but deaths resulting from an accidental house fire): Qinghai province property protests by females Deki Choeyom and Pasang Lhamo on June 27 and September 13, 2012, respectively, and Konchog Tsemo in March 2013; by female Tashi Kyi in Ganze province on August 28, 2015; and the April 6, 2012, deaths of a Tibetan Buddhist abbot, Ahub, and a nun, Ase, in a Sichuan house fire initially reported as accidental and later as self-immolation. The Commission continues to monitor reports on the whereabouts. "CECC Update: Tibetan Self-Immolations," Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 10 January 17; CECC, 2016 Annual Report, 6 October 16, 298, 311, endnote 5. The self-immolation total includes the five known self-immolations that occurred during this reporting year and are discussed in the text: Tashi Rabten (December 8, 2016), Pema Gyaltsen (March 18, 2017), Wangchug Tseten (April 15, 2017), Chagdor Kyab (May 2, 2017), and Jamyang Losel (May 19, 2017). "Tibetan Cuts Own Throat in Lhasa Freedom Protest," Radio Free Asia, 19 March 17. On June 23, 2017, a Tibetan man in Lhasa municipality, Tibet Autonomous Region, slit his throat outside the Jokhang Temple, in a solo protest during which he called for freedom for Tibet. A local Tibetan source told RFA that he thought the man was “unlikely to have survived."

50 Five Detained Following Self-Immolation in Kardze Town,” Radio Free Asia, 19 April 17. For more information on the Tibetans detained in connection with the self-immolation of Wangchug Tseten, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database records 2017-00303 on Nyima Tsering, 2017-00304 on Konchog Gyaltsen, and 2017-00305 on Tsering Gyatso.


53 Ibid.


60 See, e.g., Human Rights Watch, “China: Major Tibetan Buddhist Institution Faces Further Demolitions,” 29 March 17; “China Steps Up Demolition, Evictions at Larung Gar Buddhist Center,” Radio Free Asia, 19 September 16; Edward Wong, “China Takes a Chain Saw to a Center of Tibetan Buddhism,” New York Times, 28 November 16; International Campaign for Tibet, “Shadow of Dust Across the Sun: How Tourism Is Used To Counter Tibetan Cultural Resilience,” 13 March 17, 2–5; Edward Wong, “U.N. Human Rights Experts Urge China To End Persecution of Tibetan Monks,” 27 February 17; Letter to the Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China From Six Special Rapporteurs (each covering a separate area of human rights): the Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of expression; the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment; the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom and peaceful assembly and of association; the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living; and the Special Rapporteur on the right to non-discrimination in this context; the Special Rapporteur on the issue of part-time employment; and the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, 19 September 16; “Destruction at Larung Gar Greater Than Earlier Reported,” Radio Free Asia, 22 June 17. Chinese authorities had ordered Larung Gar to reduce its numbers in an earlier campaign in 2001. In total, since 2001, more than 7,000 monastic dwellings have been destroyed at Larung Gar.


62 Human Rights Watch, “China: Major Tibetan Buddhist Institution Faces Further Demolitions,” 29 March 17; “Larung Gar Expulsions Now Complete: Local Source,” Radio Free Asia, 7 April 17. According to RFA, the order apparently came from the central government. The Sichuan provincial governor, Yin Li, and other Chinese officials visited Larung Gar on March 30, 2017, and during a meeting with the management committee of the institute, reminded them that “higher authorities” had ordered the expulsions and demolitions. See also “China Steps Up Demolition, Evictions at Larung Gar Buddhist Center,” Radio Free Asia, 19 September 16; “Destruction at Larung Gar Greater Than Earlier Reported,” Radio Free Asia, 22 June 17. Chinese authorities had ordered Larung Gar to reduce its numbers in an earlier campaign in 2001. In total, since 2001, more than 7,000 monastic dwellings have been destroyed at Larung Gar.

quently reduced by more than 1,000 homes. However, according to the June 22, 2017, report from Radio Free Asia, Chinese authorities had demolished 4,725 homes since 2016.


14International Campaign for Tibet, “Shadow of Dust Across the Sun: How Tourism Is Used To Counter Tibetan Cultural Resilience,” 13 March 17, 1, 5–7, 11, 12–13; Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, “Undercover in Larung Gar: A Year After Demolition, World’s Largest Tibetan Buddhist Institute Sliced Like a Melon,” 11 August 17. A Western researcher quoted in ICT’s report who recently traveled to the area said that many of the local Tibetans he spoke with “believe that behind the evictions and destruction is an interest in transforming the now world-famous Buddhist institutes into a tourist destination, which will further dilute the authentic culture.” See also Steve Shaw, “China Tears Down the Tibetan City in the Sky,” Tibet
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The Diplomat, 3 August 17; “Tibetans Forced From Their Land in Town Near Larung Gar,” Radio Free Asia, 16 August 16.

\(^{76}\)Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, “Undercover in Larung Gar: A Year After Demolition, World’s Largest Tibetan Buddhist Institute Sliced Like a Melon,” 11 August 17.

\(^{77}\)Human Rights Watch, “China: 1,000 Evictions From Tibetan Buddhist Centers,” 14 September 16.

\(^{78}\)Ibid.

\(^{79}\)International Campaign for Tibet, “Shadow of Dust Across the Sun: How Tourism Is Used To Counter Tibetan Cultural Resilience,” 13 March 17, 4–5.

\(^{80}\)International Campaign for Tibet, “Shadow of Dust Across the Sun: How Tourism Is Used To Counter Tibetan Cultural Resilience,” 13 March 17, 1, 8, 11, 13. See also Human Rights Watch, “China: 1,000 Evictions From Tibetan Buddhist Centers,” 14 September 16.

\(^{81}\)“Demolition of Tibetan Residences Underway at Sichuan’s Yachen Gar Buddhist Center,” Radio Free Asia, 15 August 17.

\(^{82}\)Ibid.

\(^{83}\)Human Rights Watch, “China: 1,000 Evictions From Tibetan Buddhist Centers,” 14 September 16; Letter to the Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva, from Six Special Rapporteurs (each covering a separate area of human rights); the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment; the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; the Special Rapporteur on minority issues; and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief. AL CHN 10/2016, 7 November 16.

\(^{84}\)Letter to the Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva, from Six Special Rapporteurs (each covering a separate area of human rights); the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment; the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; the Special Rapporteur on minority issues; and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, AL CHN 10/2016, 7 November 16.


\(^{86}\)Tabulation on Nationalities of 2010 Population Census of China, Volume 1 [Zhongguo 2010 nian renkou pingjia fen min renkou ziliao changji], Department of Population and Employment Statistics, National Bureau of Statistics of China, and Department of Economic Development,
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100 Ibid; Tibetans Ordered Home by China Are Questioned by Police, Lose Their Passports,” Radio Free Asia, 23 January 17; Tibet Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, “Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report 2016,” 24 February 17, 64–68; Tibet Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), “China Restricts Freedom of Movement of Tibetans Ahead of Dalai Lama’s Teachings,” 24 November 16. TCHRD reported on 39 Tibetan pilgrims traveling from China with Chinese passports who were detained by Nepal police at the Nepal-India border for apparently not having visas to travel to India. They had reportedly decided against applying for Indian visas “for fear of reprisals from the Chinese government,” because if Chinese authorities saw Indian visas in their passports, they could end up jailed after their return to China.

101 “Tibetans in China Defy Warnings, Support the Kalachakra,” Radio Free Asia, 6 January 17; “China Calls Dalai Lama’s Kalachakra ‘Illegal,’ Threatens Punishment for Those Taking Part,” Radio Free Asia, 5 January 17. The Kalachakra, or ‘Wheel of Time,’ is “a ritual that prepares devotees to be reborn in Shambhala, a celestial kingdom which it is said, will vanquish the forces of evil in a future cosmic battle.”


105 “Tibetan Protestor Detained, Missing in Serthar,” Radio Free Asia, 16 February 17. For more information on Sonam Tashi, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2017-00099.

106 “China Calls Dalai Lama’s Kalachakra ‘Illegal’; Threatens Punishment for Those Taking Part,” Radio Free Asia, 5 January 17. The Kalachakra, or ‘Wheel of Time,’ is “a ritual that prepares devotees to be reborn in Shambhala, a celestial kingdom which it is said, will vanquish the forces of evil in a future cosmic battle.”

107 “Tibetans Ordered Home by China Are Questioned by Police, Lose Their Passports,” Radio Free Asia, 23 January 17; Tibet Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, “Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report 2016,” 24 February 17, 64–68; Tibet Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), “China Restricts Freedom of Movement of Tibetans Ahead of Dalai Lama’s Teachings,” 24 November 16. TCHRD reported on 39 Tibetan pilgrims traveling from China with Chinese passports who were detained by Nepal police at the Nepal-India border for apparently not having visas to travel to India. They had reportedly decided against applying for Indian visas “for fear of reprisals from the Chinese government,” because if Chinese authorities saw Indian visas in their passports, they could end up jailed after their return to China.


110 “Tibetans in China Defy Warnings, Support the Kalachakra,” Radio Free Asia, 6 January 17; “China Calls Dalai Lama’s Kalachakra ‘Illegal,’ Threatens Punishment for Those Taking Part,” Radio Free Asia, 5 January 17; Masashi Crete-Nishihata, Jeffrey Knockel, and Lotus Ruan, “Tibetans Blocked From Kalachakra at Borders and on WeChat,” University of Toronto, Munk School of Global Affairs, Citizen Lab, 10 January 17.

111 “Tibetans in China Defy Warnings, Support the Kalachakra,” Radio Free Asia, 6 January 17; “China Calls Dalai Lama’s Kalachakra ‘Illegal,’ Threatens Punishment for Those Taking Part,” Radio Free Asia, 5 January 17; Masashi Crete-Nishihata, Jeffrey Knockel, and Lotus Ruan, “Tibetans Blocked From Kalachakra at Borders and on WeChat,” University of Toronto, Munk School of Global Affairs, Citizen Lab, 10 January 17.
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106 “Tibetan Monk Detained in First Ngaba Protest This Year,” Radio Free Asia, 27 February 2017. For more information on Lobsang Tsetultrim, see the Commission’s political prisoner database record 2017-00233.


117 Alak Dorshi, “I Too Can Speak About Education,” translated in High Peaks Pure Earth, 15 September 14. Abbot of Larung Gar Khenpo Tsultrim Lodoe wrote of the importance of the Tibetan language, “Language is the fundamental lifeline of a culture. It is the reservoir of identity and the most precious gem of a nationality—of a people.”

118 “Tibetans in Chengdu Call for Bilingual Education for Their Children,” Radio Free Asia, 19 January 17. In January 2017, a Chengdu-based Tibetan professor at Sichuan Normal University, and a member of the regional Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, submitted a proposal to that body urging the creation of a bilingual education system. She wrote that an estimated 100,000 Tibetans live in Chengdu, including reportedly 2,000 school-age children, and that there are no schools that teach in the Tibetan language. “An Open Letter to Zhang Wenkui, Party Secretary of Tsolho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, From Tsering Kyi,” translated by High Peaks Pure Earth, 11 April 17; Alak Dorshi, “I Too Can Speak About Education,” translated in High Peaks Pure Earth, 14 April 17.


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125 Ibid. See also Stephen Chen, “China Plans World’s Biggest National Park on Tibetan Plateau,” South China Morning Post, 22 April 17.


128 Wu Yan, “First Mars Simulation Base To Be Built in Northwest China,” China Daily, 26 July 17.