



Tibet Report

March 2021

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Aim

This report is intended to raise awareness about the difficulties minorities and marginalised groups face in Tibet. It covers a few significant human rights events concerning minority and marginalised groups in March of 2021.

TIBET

The Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) is a province-level entity of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). It was formally established in 1965 after the People’s Liberation Army defeated the local army and forced Tibetan representatives to accept China’s sovereignty and incorporate the region into the PRC. The 14th Dalai Lama escaped from Tibet and, while exiled in Dharamshala, India, set up the Government of Tibet. Some areas formerly belonging to the Tibet Area became the Tibetan Autonomous Region, while some others were incorporated into the neighbouring Chinese provinces (Britannica, Tibet).

Region-	Tibet
Population-	6.5 Million
Capital-	Lhasa
Largest City-	Nagqu
Major Languages-	Tibetan and other languages such as Mandarin and Hindi
Religion-	70% of the population follows Tibetan Buddhism, while rest are Tibetan Christians and Muslims
Ethnicities-	East Asian ethnicity mostly
Life Expectancy at Birth-	70.60 years in 2019



Source-<https://www.britannica.com/place/Tibet>

Human rights violations against minorities in Tibet

In 2019, Tibet was given a score of 1/100 on the think-tank Freedom House's Freedom in the World survey. (Freedom House Report 2020) The people in Tibet face human rights violations in almost every aspect of their lives, be it political, cultural, religious, social, and economical.

1. Political Despotism

The people of Tibet are often subjected to political suppression. Tibet has a very intrusive and intense surveillance system that closely monitors the population, and any anti-China activity is immediately curbed (Free Tibet, 2020). People who carry out peaceful protests against the Chinese policies and supremacy are treated with violent retaliation by the police. Protesters are tortured, imprisoned, and killed. Freedom of speech and expression are also denied. Those who raise their voice against the Chinese regime, demanding the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet, are immediately arrested and tortured (Free Tibet, 2020). In some cases, people were accused of attempting to damage the Chinese State by speaking against its policies and were convicted to death (Washington Post, 2012; Free Tibet, July 2020).

2. Denial of Cultural and Religious Rights

The Chinese policies lead to religious suppression in Tibet, and thus Tibetans face the denial of their religious and cultural rights daily. Buddhists are particularly affected, as Buddhist centres have been systematically taken under the control of Chinese authorities. Religion has always been a unique aspect of Tibetan culture. The US State Department in 2016 released a report on international religious freedom which stated that religious freedom is being severely repressed in Tibet. (Free Tibet) People who follow the teachings of the Dalai Lama and Buddhist values are put into detention centres where they are subjected to mental torture and physical hardships (Central Tibetan Administration, January 2020). All aspects of Tibetan Buddhism are subject to state control, and China has even claimed the right to appoint the leader of Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama. (Free Tibet) The International Religious Freedom Report for 2018 states that in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and other Tibetan areas under Chinese rule, "authorities continued to engage in widespread interference in religious practices, especially in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and nunneries." (International Campaign for Tibet June 2018) Tibetans are banned from celebrating their national festivals, and the schools are prevented from teaching students in the Tibetan language, while Mandarin has been made compulsory in schools (Free Tibet, 2020).

3. Denial of Socio-Economic rights of Tibetans

China has significantly focused on infrastructure development, construction projects, tourism, and other industries in the Tibetan territory. Consequently, those projects attract a large number of Han Chinese immigrants, who are given preference in employment in various industries, leaving very few job opportunities for local Tibetans. China has also forcefully displaced thousands of Tibetan nomads by obtaining their land for new projects, gaining control over Tibet's natural resources.

Human rights events of March 2021

Two Students Arrested for Publicly Displaying ‘Illegal Flag And Photo’ of a Football Team in Tibet.



Jampa Tsering and Dugkar Tsering arrested by Chinese Authorities for the public display of ‘illegal flag and photo’. Image source-<https://www.tibetwatch.org/news/2021/3/22/tibetan-students-arrested-for-football-team-flag-and-emblem>

Jampa Tsering and Dugkar Tsering, two students from the Tsolho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, were arrested by the Chinese authorities for inciting separatism by publicly displaying the flag and the logo of the football team at the 6th “Holy Lake Cup” football match (Central Tibetan Administration, March 2021). The flag and logo had been designed by the two students themselves, and the Chinese authorities referred to it as an act of trying to subvert national unity. The design of the flag and the logo are suspected of having resembled the Tibetan National Flag. The Tibetan National Flag is banned in Tibet, and hoisting or even possessing it is illegal.

Tibetan Prisoner Who Was Released Early From Prison In ‘Critical’ Health Condition.

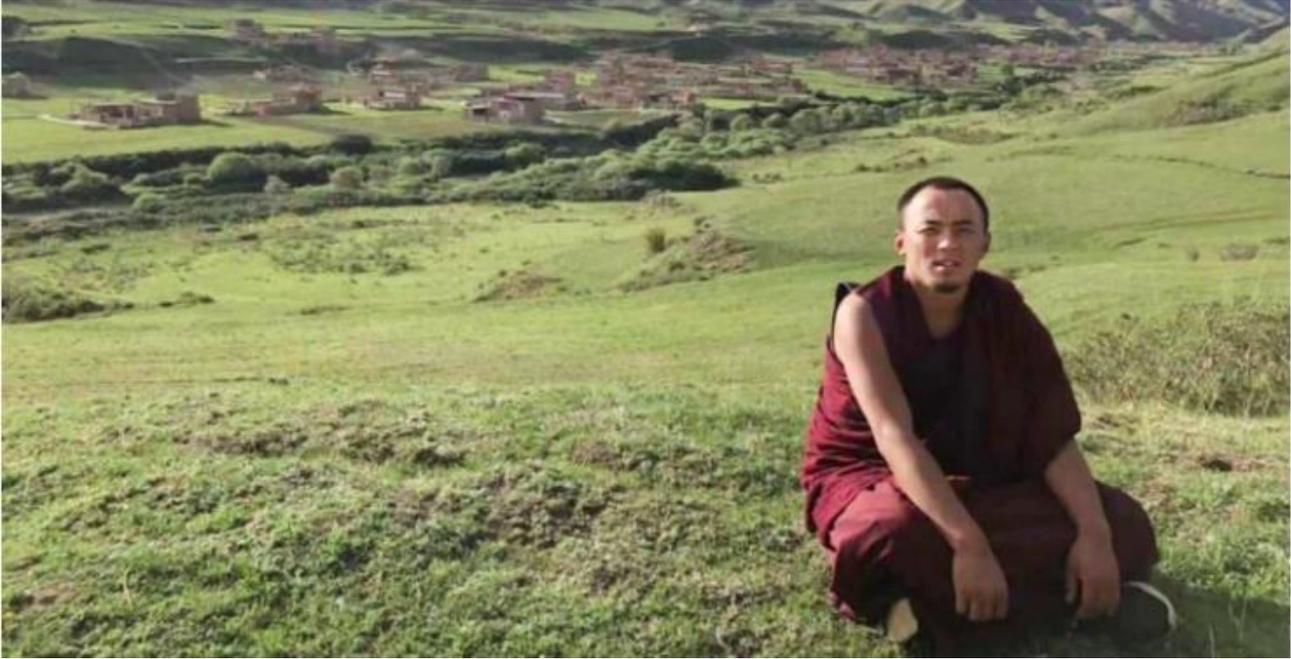


Undated image of Gangbu Rikgye Nyima, a Tibetan political prisoner. Image Source- <https://tibet.net/tibetan-prisoner-released-a-year-early-in-very-serious-health-condition/>

Gangbu Rikgye Nyima was arrested in 2012 following the Tibetan New Year protest in Drakgo and Serthar counties of Tibet. While these protests were peaceful, Nyima was sentenced to 10 years in prison for disrupting social stability and for inciting separatism in Tibet. Two monks were also arrested along with him and eight other people. At the end of February 2021, Nyima was given an early release from his sentence, and since then, he has been in a very critical health condition. His family was prohibited from receiving him at the prison, and he was directly taken to his home by Chinese authorities. While serving his time in prison, Nyima repeatedly protested and was, as a result, subjected to harsh beatings by the prison guards. He was also locked up in dark cells for many days. This torture has led him to have weak eyesight, severe headaches and has damaged his lungs and spine.

The case of Gangbu Rikgye Nyima is one of the cases of premature releases of Tibetan political prisoners in critical health conditions by Chinese authorities in order to evade the responsibility for their deaths. After his release from prison, Nyima had written, “As long as I live, I will always remember how the Chinese government has imprisoned me on false charges and took away my rights”. (Central Tibetan Administration, March 2021)

A Monk Sentenced To Four And Half Years Of Imprisonment In Tibet



29-year-old Rinchen Tsultrim, Image Source- <https://savetibet.org/tibetan-monk-held-incommunicado-for-over-one-year/>

Rinchen Tsultrim, a 29-year-old monk from the Kashul village in Ngaba County in eastern Tibet, has been accused of ‘sabotaging the media and endangering the public safety under the Article 124 of the Criminal Law of the People’s Republic of China. He has already been arrested twice for his writings about the various issues in Tibet as well as for having discussions regarding the same with people outside Tibet. Due to his constant writing about the various issues in Tibet, especially on his personal blog ‘Chetawa’ and on other media, Rinchen was also banned from using WeChat, a Chinese messaging app and has been under heavy surveillance of the local Chinese authorities (Tibet Post International, April 2021). On March 26, 2021, Rinchen’s parents were notified that he had been sentenced to four and half years jail term by the Intermediate People’s Court in Chengdu, Sichuan province. The exact reasons behind his arrest are still unknown.

Concluding Remarks

Tibetans face many violations of their human rights, be it through unlawful sentences, constant surveillance, restriction of movement, and many others. Many of these incidences never even come into the light due to restrictions on news media and various sources on communication like social media.

There is an urgent need for national and international bodies to address the rising issue of human rights violations in Tibet to bring a positive change in the current situation. The people of Tibet deserve their justice, and their rights must be upheld at all costs.

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