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TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

## Monthly Translation and Analyses Digest

The Electronic Monthly Digest is a compilation of selected stories from Chinese state media that are related to human rights situation in Tibet. It provides translation and analyses of Chinese government propaganda publications that are otherwise available only in Chinese and Tibetan language.



Front page image: Mangra County Public Security Bureau striking hard on 'organised and gang crimes' in June 2019

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## China announces prize money for tip-offs on illegal online contents in Tibet

Chinese authorities in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) issued a notice announcing cash prizes upto 300,000 yuan (approx. USD 44,000) in return for reporting illegal online contents as part of its "social supervision strategy to mobilise the general public to effectively prevent and combat illegal and criminal online contents."

The TAR Internet Information Office, TAR Public Security Department and TAR Communications Administration issued the notice on 28 February this year. The measures incentivising information on became effective from the day of the announcement.

Citing various domestic Chinese laws and regulations such as the Constitution, Criminal Law, Public Security Administration Punishment Law, Anti-Terrorism Law, Cyber Security Law, and the Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Safeguarding Internet Security, the incentive measures will be implemented in conjunction with the "actual situation in TAR."

The notice bans the use of network communication tools "to collect, produce, download, store, publish, disseminate, and publicise malicious attacks against the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese government, the socialist system, the regional ethnic autonomy system, and the party and the government's policy of managing TAR." It further bans the "fabrication or deliberate dissemination of information that damages the image of the country, seriously jeopardises the interests of the country, and distorts the history of the party, the nation and the army."

Further, the notice criminalises information that contains "subverting state power, overthrowing the socialist system, and splitting the country."

The 'network communication tools' include but are not limited to, computers, mobile phones, instant messaging, videophones, wearable network devices, etc. And the online content that are monitored include but are not limited to words, pictures, audio and video, signs, personal information, cartoons, etc.

Using online banking and payment methods including electronic cheques and credit cards as well as Alipay and WeChat to send donations to organisations and personnels related to "ethnic separatist forces, religious extremist forces, violent terrorist forces" is criminalised.

The notice bans "illegal sharing of information about the country's political, economic, social, military, cultural, religious and other state secrets or intelligence information with overseas organisations, institutions and individuals." Other banned information includes "provoking and creating ethnic conflicts", "inciting ethnic hatred and discrimination", "provoking and inciting hostility, confrontation, and conflict between various religious beliefs and religious ideologies."

Netizens using network communication tools to "organise or form illegal organisations in the name of 'public welfare', 'environmental protection', 'education', 'medical' and 'poverty alleviation' in order to distort and attack party and government policies" will face severe consequences. Similarly the notice bans browsing, disseminating, downloading, and storing information published by organisations and individuals related to "domestic and foreign national separatist forces, religious extremist forces, and violent terrorist organisations."

Generally online activities and other modes of communication such as phone remain highly restricted in Tibet. Surveillance and censorship of online contents are routine practices employed Chinese authorities to suppress dissent and criticism of

government policies. But this latest notification is significant in the context of the ongoing nationwide campaign to crush 'black and evil forces' and the already shrinking space for freedom of expression, thought and information.

Chinese authorities put a huge emphasis on these crimes as they deem them a threat to the stability of the Chinese nation. Many of the criminal activities listed in the January 2018 TAR police notice on eliminating vaguely defined 'organised crimes had also been mentioned in the current notice, which shows not just the interlinkages between these two seemingly separate measures.

In 2018, TAR Public Security Bureau was offering rewards of up to 100,000 yuan (US \$ 15,600), in contrast to the whopping 300,000 yuan that the current notice is offering, showing that the CCP attaches

a great deal of importance to the knowledge of alleged illegal activities. Additionally, the current notice includes obscure and overly broad crimes such as "Challenging China's territorial claims over Tibet", "Participating in separatist activities," Calling for the 'middle way' ", " Advocacy of mother tongue ", "Using religion to interfere in grassroots-level administrative affairs or education" that are similar to the previous 2018 notice. The vaguely defined crimes allow more leeway for Chinese authorities to persecute persons engaging in peaceful dissent and criticism of repressive government policies. In the name of 'social supervision' strategy, the Chinese authorities is determined to turn the public into government spies, as the incentives that are offered require the Tibetans to report on each other. This is just one example of the creation of a police state in Tibet.

## **China admits anti-separatist crackdown part of campaign on organised crime**

China has intensified its crackdown on 'organised crime' related to 'black and evil forces' particularly in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and Qinghai Province as both regions underwent the first periodic inspections sent by central government authorities to assess the effectiveness of the campaign.

Zhu Weiqun, former head of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and former deputy head of the United Front Work Department told a briefing that the anti-crime campaign in Tibet should be "integrated with the fight against separatist forces". Zhu's statement validated concerns expressed by human rights activists and organisations that the three-year campaign that was launched in January 2018 is being used to crush peaceful dissent and government criticism in Tibet.

Official Chinese media quoted establishment intellectuals such as Xiong Kunxin, a professor at Tibet University in Lhasa, who claimed that “overseas secessionists may be the root of some gang crimes” in Tibet. Xiong alleged that “local gangs collude with and receive support from overseas separatist forces”, adding, “These gangs differ from normal ones because they aim to disturb the region's social stability and prosperity rather than make money.”

The inspection team to TAR was among the 10 sent by central authorities from late May

to early June this year to provincial-level regions, including Beijing, Shaanxi and Heilongjiang, marking the inspection coverage of all provincial-level regions in PRC.

In January this year, the work report of the TAR Higher People's Court claimed that 360 people in 268 cases were found guilty during the region's crackdown on 'gang crimes' in 2018. Another 25 people were also punished for 'inciting separatism' or 'financial crimes, which jeopardised national security'.

## **Central government inspection teams visit TAR**

The TAR authorities held a mobilisation meeting on 11 June to launch the deployment of the 13th inspection team headed by Zhu Weiqun to evaluate the effectiveness of the ongoing campaign. The meeting was attended by, among others, TAR party secretary Wu Yingjie, TAR deputy party secretary Deng Yexian, TAR governor Che Dalha and chairman of the Standing Committee of TAR People's Congress Losang Gyaltzen.

The inspection team was stationed in TAR for 23 days beginning from 10 June to 2 July this year during which the team was expected to receive tip-offs from the public and conduct investigations of the 'protective umbrellas' behind criminal organisations and the eradication of

the gangs' operations. Local authorities made available hotlines, email addresses and postboxes to receive tip-offs from the public about suspected criminal activities.

## **Chinese authorities claim victory in anti-crime crackdown amid central government inspection in Qinghai**

On 12 June, local authorities in Qinghai Province released the initial results of the province's sweeping campaign against 'black and evil forces' at a press conference that was attended by representatives from the Provincial Discipline Inspection Committee, Provincial Higher People's Court, Provincial People's Procuratorate, Provincial Public Security Bureau (PSB) and Provincial Judicial Bureau presented reports.



Party cadres in Chabcha organising propaganda and mobilisation activities in Bumpa Village in Tanakma Town

According to the provincial PSB authorities, the campaign has so far resulted in the destruction of five Mafia organisations, 14 evil criminal groups, 44 criminal gangs and arrest of 658 people with links to criminal groups.

By 10 June, the provincial procuratorate had approved the arrest of 333 criminal suspects and public prosecution initiated against 408 people. The provincial court officials, calling the campaign “an important political responsibility”, reported that since the launch of the campaign, the provincial court has accepted 72 criminal cases involving 622 criminals, out of which 56 cases involving 343 people have been settled. In addition, the Provincial Discipline Inspection Committee and supervision organs at all levels received clues to 461 criminal gangs out of which 219 cases have been investigated.

Other Chinese government media networks reporting on the campaign in Kyegudo (Ch: Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture noted that the primary objectives of the campaign were “to clean up black and evil forces in order to create a favourable positive environment for establishing social stability and strengthening grassroots governance.”

It further noted that the prefectural political and legal committee considers it “an important political responsibility to protect state security and stability of Yushu.



A publicity image on the anti-crime crackdown displayed on Chentsa government WeChat account in June 2019

By April 2019, authorities in the prefecture had investigated and passed verdicts on one criminal group and 5 related cases, in addition to arresting 39 people. A total of 52 people were placed in criminal detention and 41 corruption cases were investigated.

Various party and government departments such as the Prefecture Discipline and Inspection Committee, Prefecture Party Organisation Bureau, Prefecture Party Propaganda Department, Prefecture Higher People’s Court, Prefecture People’s Procuratorate and Prefecture PSB are involved in the campaign.

On 6 June, local authorities in Kyegudo Town organised a massive mobilisation and propaganda activity on the campaign. About 80 prefecture government offices and departments and about 1,100 officials took part in the

campaign. About 160 wooden and 150 cloth propaganda banners, in addition to 43000 publicity materials were distributed.



Press conference on anti-crime campaign in Qinghai Province

The local public security bureau organised similar propaganda and mobilisation activities at all levels of schools including kindergarten classes in Mangra (Ch: Guinan) County in Tsolho (Ch: Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. The mobilisation and propaganda campaign exhorted students and teachers alike to identify criminal activities related to gangs and organised crime and report them to the relevant authorities.



Anti-crime campaign mobilisation and propaganda activity for school children in Mangra County

Local public security bureau organised mobilisation and propaganda activities in all the monastic institutions located in Mangra County to involve the religious practitioners and personnel in effectively carrying out the anti-organised crime campaign. Local authorities stated that the campaign would help establish favourable relations between the nation, nationalities and religion.

Similar activities were organised in the farming and nomadic communities of Chentsa (Ch: Jianzha) County in Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Terlinkha (Ch: Delingha) in Tsonub (Ch: Hiaksi) Mongolian-Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and Chabcha (Ch: Gonghe) County in Tsolho (Ch: Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. In Chabcha, party cadres organised propaganda and mobilisation activities in Bumpa Village in Tanakma Town, which involved the cadres speaking to groups of villagers and making visits to the homes of villagers to highlight the importance of anti-crime campaign.



Anti-crime campaign in monastic institutions in Mangra County

## **More than 7000 households and 28000 people relocated in anti-poverty drive**

Relocation is the main method employed by Malho (Ch: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture to alleviate poverty in the region. The official *Qinghai Tibetan News* reported that since 2016, local authorities have "uprooted poverty and helped the poor cast off the hat of poverty" by relocating 7376 households and 28717 people in the prefecture.

Relocation remains one of the most contentious issues directly linked to China's environmental and development policy in Tibet. In the past years, Chinese authorities have accelerated the relocation and resettlement of large numbers of rural Tibetan residents into government built housing located in the outskirts of new and existing urban towns in the name of environmental protection and economic development.

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***Experiences of resettled Tibetan nomads and farmers reveal that relocation has contributed to impoverishment and economic insecurity, homelessness, and unemployment.***

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However international human rights monitors have repeatedly criticised China's model of aggressive development and conservation policy due to its negative consequences on economic independence including rural livelihood sources and food security.

## **Exhibition on Chinese version of Tibetan reincarnation system**

On 12 June, local Chinese authorities held an exhibition in Lhasa to promote the Chinese government narrative on the Tibetan reincarnation system, as part of the ongoing propaganda activities to cultivate 'advanced and patriotic' monks and nuns in TAR.

The official *Tibet Daily* reported that the exhibition was jointly organised at the Tibetan Buddhist College by TAR Culture Research Center of the China Tibetology Research Center and the TAR Branch of the Buddhist Association of China to "popularise the reincarnation knowledge, religious rituals and historical customs of the reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhism."

The report claimed that "the religious practitioners and personnel through careful study and observation believe that the reincarnation and management of Tibetan Buddhism must adhere to the party's leadership, adhere to the law, follow the religious rituals and historical customs, and adhere to the principle of independence and self-management."

## Grassland Protection and Management Conference in Mangra County

At a conference organized earlier this month, local authorities in Mangchu (Ch: Mangqu) Town, in Mangra (Ch: Guinan) County, Tsolho (Ch: Hainan) TAP, Qinghai Province recruited local residents to strengthen the existing ecological protection and development policy.

The 2019 'Grassland Ecology Management Instructor Employment Conference' concluded with the signing of employment contracts with 143 "grassland ecological management inspectors" that are tasked with carrying out the government's grassland protection policy.

The official *Guinan News Network* reported that the 'grassland ecological management personnel' were responsible for adhering to four cardinal duties fundamental to the government's environmental and development policy in Tibet.

China's grassland management policy has been criticised by independent analysts for its simplistic and flawed logic and application. Many have questioned its consequences on rural livelihood and economic independence.

According to the agreement signed between the local authorities and the grassland inspectors, the latter is responsible for the "implementation of the grassland ecological protection reward policy, which includes reducing livestock according to the approved stocking capacity at the county level, and urging the local residents to controlling animal husbandry and reducing livestock." Secondly, they are required to "inspect, report, and clamp down on illegal use of grassland such as grassland reclamation, excavation of herbs and plants, mining and sand mining, illegal use of fire, etc. in the protected area, and assist the grassland administrative department or the supervision organisation to

collect evidence and carry out the work. Illegal cases shall be investigated and punished, and the grassland infrastructure in the protection and protection area shall be supervised.

The third is to strictly supervise ecological projects initiated by the government. In the implementation of various ecological protection construction projects such as pest control, grassland degradation control, grassland maintenance, etc., the inspectors "must follow stringent supervisory duties, ensure the high standards and high quality implementation of ecological protection projects, to ensure the expected results of the project, and consolidate the grassland ecological construction foundation."

The fourth is to "promote government policies and regulations by actively participating in the learning and training activities organised by various levels of organisations and setting an example by promoting the basic knowledge of grassland ecological protection policies and related laws and regulations among the masses."



## China's Tibetan "Fortress"\*

The Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) has chosen the alleviation of poverty and re-skilling or resettlement of people as their central goal heading into the end of the decade. A goal they claim will build "a well-off society in an all-round way."

Adhering to this, let us see the figures on how much the Chinese government has put into these projects. As of March 2019, the plan would need 67.719 billion yuan, approximately 9.74 billion USD, the investment encompasses the projects developed to re-skill workers and the settlements developed to house them into more "adequate lifestyles".

The World Bank states that the extreme poverty line refers to people who live less than or equivalent to US\$1.90 a day, but this is poorly phrased for Tibetans. Many Tibetans happen to be nomads who do not trade in monetary terms rather they measure wealth based off the amount of livestock they own or produce, therefore it is unjust to label these Tibetans as ones that are living in extreme poverty conditions, clearly the Chinese government is not out to improve the lives of Tibetan nomads who have been living self-sufficiently on their land for thousands of years, rather their purpose is to ensure that Tibetan nomadic culture is erased and that the nomadic lands can be used for industrial and urbanisation.

Additionally the new resettlement villages are supposed to provide the residents with a "modern lifestyle", as president Xi Jinping was quoted saying, "The poor people living in the ecologically fragile areas will be transferred to areas with better natural environment, more complete production

factors and more convenient living conditions". The grim truth is that China intends to use Tibet's natural resources to support the needs of its massive population at the expense of the Tibetan environment, culture and identity.

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***As of March 2019 the plan would need 67.719 billion yuan, approximately 9.74 billion USD***

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Official media claimed this month that "as of March 2019, the Tibet Autonomous Region has trained 128,000 poor laborers and transferred 113,000 jobs. A group of farmers and herdsman who have been poor in the past and have no life in their lives are mastering skills through skills training, getting rid of poverty and getting rich, and living a prosperous life. There were 806 completed and 98 under construction [out of a planned] 905 poverty alleviation and resettlement areas in Tibet. Accumulated investment of 15.81 billion yuan, accounting for 92% of the total plan; completed 56,810 sets of completed housing, accounting for 93% of the total plan; built area of 6.074 million square meters, accounting for 91% of the total plan; relocation of 54396 households, 236,752 people, accounting for 89% of the plan."

Such statements provide context and figures to a topic that is shrouded in secrecy and lacks objective details, and there are still many questions that need to be answered, such as what were the skills the farmers were trained in, where do they work, what are their opinions on the poverty alleviation programs. A common trend that is prevalent in Tibet is that the Han Chinese are controlling most of the businesses, subsequently the wealth, effectively making Tibetans second class citizens. It has been long observed that when China works on urbanizing Tibet's cities it has resulted in the steady rise of Han Chinese migrants from the mainland. An increase in Han Chinese migrants is reflected in the economic data for Tibet making it look as if Tibetans are getting wealthier on paper, because the average disposable income will be higher, but this does not solve the issue of eliminating extreme poverty from Tibet. Rather it seems more of an attack on Tibetan culture and a way of making Tibetans a minority inside their own country. This can most certainly be a fact due to the rise of Han Chinese migrants in the last 20 years. With the development of huge interstate highways such as National Highway 318, the influx of migrants from mainland China is at an alltime high. A more pressing issue is the fact that China is planning on moving approx. 264,000 Tibetans with about 237,000 already being moved to poverty alleviation settlements. In the past empires used to merge people into several large settlements with the purpose of trouble-free surveillance. China is already known for their high tech surveillance systems implemented in Xinjiang and Tibet with the purpose of squashing out "separatism".

Taking another turn, looking at the environmental impacts of the movement of Tibetan nomads from their homelands and the reskilling of them will present some new light on the extent of the issue in Tibet. Tibet has one of the most fragile ecosystems in the world, often dubbed the "Roof of the World", it quite literally supports billions of people as Tibet is the source of countless rivers that supply water to East Asia. The removal of one variable in this ecosystem does create drastic results, with the steady removal of Tibetan nomads it will lead to a change in the behavior of animals that used to prey on livestock, which in turn can change the topography of grasslands thus affecting the current of rivers. Tibet is known to contain large reserves of minerals which can boost China's economy, minerals such as uranium, zinc, copper, and others will allow China to be more self-sufficient and not rely on other nations for minerals. Since China's illegal takeover of Tibet there has been extensive logging of virgin forests, widespread mining projects, construction of dams and dumping of nuclear waste. With the ongoing US-China trade war we are seeing China become more and more isolated from Western nations, it is becoming increasingly likely that China will rely more on Tibet to support their economy.

\*The author of this article is Kunsel Subramanyam, an intern at TCHRD.