

# TIBET BRIEF

JUNE 2022

A REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

## NEW ICT REPORT SPOTLIGHTS PERSECUTION OF TIBETAN ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS

**THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET HAS RELEASED A NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTING CHINA'S PERSECUTION OF TIBETANS WHO DEFEND THEIR VITAL AND VULNERABLE ENVIRONMENT.**

The report "Environmental Defenders of Tibet: China's persecution of Tibetan environmental defenders" was released ahead of World Environment Day on 5 June. It collates and analyzes information on 50 cases of known Tibetan environmental defenders who have been reportedly persecuted - defined as

detained arbitrarily, arrested, tried, and/or sentenced - since 2008.

It reveals the Chinese government's true level of oppression and aims in environmental management, despite its supposed global position as being committed to sustainability.

The facts on the ground contradict this claim and provide proof that not only are Tibetan environmental defenders silenced, but the consequences of suppressing their calls for action are grave, given the major threats facing Tibet's environment and the significance of the Tibetan Plateau to the Asian region and global climate system.

The report closes with a number of recommendations for governments and UN agencies to consider, including raising cases of Tibetan environmental defenders with the Chinese government and promote the opening up of the Tibetan Plateau for scientific research and international collaboration.

[Click here to read the report.](#)



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REPORT

### ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS OF TIBET

CHINA'S PERSECUTION OF TIBETAN ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS

JUNE 2022



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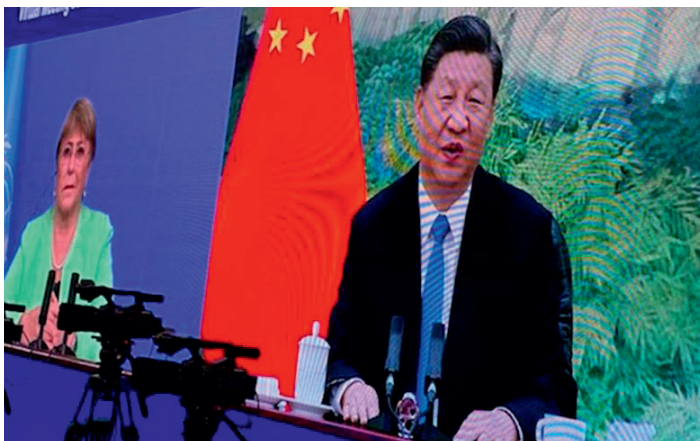
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## UN HUMAN RIGHTS CHIEF'S VISIT IS CHINA'S POLITICAL VICTORY

THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET IS DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED BY THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS MICHELLE BACHELET'S VISIT TO CHINA LAST MAY. ICT BELIEVES SHE HANDED THE COMMUNIST REGIME A POLITICAL VICTORY.



Michelle Bachelet attends a virtual meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on her visit to Guangzhou, China. (Photo: OHCHR)

Despite great [concern](#) regarding the lack of transparency and conditions of the trip, Bachelet visited China between 23 and 28 May – the first visit to China by a UN High Commissioner since 2005. But she did not visit Tibet and failed to acknowledge the evidence showing China's systematic human rights violations against Uyghurs, Tibetans, Mongols, and many others. This “has emboldened China and further disempowered civil society actors,” ICT said.

At the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council held between 13 June-8 July in Geneva, China and the High Commissioner's visit featured prominently. On 10 June, shortly before the start of the session, 42 UN human rights mandate holders published a [joint statement](#) stressing that high-level engagement does not replace the “urgent need for a complete assessment of the human rights situation in the country, and especially in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, the Tibet Autonomous region and in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region,” particularly given the absence of “any signs of political will [by China] to address the concerns raised.”

The Netherlands also delivered a [joint statement](#) on behalf of 47 countries expressing grave worries about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong. The joint statement also expressed concerns about the restrictions placed on the high commissioner's visit to China. It also called on her to provide a timeline for the release of her office's previously announced report on Xinjiang.

During the session, the International Campaign for Tibet's UN Advocacy Team also [delivered three statements on Tibet](#) on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, on the issues of education, climate change, and freedom of opinion and expression.

## OCTOGENARIAN TIBETAN SETS HIMSELF ON FIRE IN PROTEST AGAINST CHINESE RULE



**IN THE LATEST KNOWN SELF-IMMOLATION PROTEST AGAINST CHINESE RULE IN TIBET, AN 81-YEAR-OLD TIBETAN NAMED TAPHUN SET HIMSELF ON FIRE IN THE EARLY MORNING OF 27 MARCH.**

According to reliable sources, the elderly Tibetan self-immolated in front of the police station outside Kirti Monastery in Ngaba county (Chinese: Aba), Ngaba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan. He is believed to have died during his protest, but it is not known whether Ngaba county police has handed his body back to his family.

After two years without any known self-

immolations in Tibet, Taphun is the second person confirmed to have set themselves on fire this year. It follows [Tsewang Norbu](#), a 25-year-old Tibetan singer, who self-immolated in Lhasa on 25 February and later succumbed to his burns. Another Tibetan is also [reported](#) to have set himself alight in Kyegudo (Jiegu) in Yulshul (Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai, but ICT has not yet been able to confirm this.



## CZECH REPUBLIC MUST SHOW LEADERSHIP ON TIBETAN HUMAN RIGHTS DURING EU PRESIDENCY, ICT SAYS

WITH THE CZECH REPUBLIC ASSUMING THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION SINCE 1 JULY, THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET AND CZECHS SUPPORT TIBET HAVE CALLED ON THE CZECH GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE A NEW EU CHINA POLICY WITH HUMAN RIGHTS AT ITS CENTER.



ICT's Vincent Metten and Czechs Support Tibet's Katerina Jacques with Members of the Czech Parliament Hayato Josef Okamura and Marek Hilser in Prague on 27 June.

In a briefing paper titled "The impacts of the war in Ukraine on EU-China relations – The need for a new EU human rights policy on China and on the muted conflict in Tibet," released in advance of the Presidency, the two organizations noted how the new geopolitical context calls for a new EU policy on China and Tibet.

The briefing paper – which also includes five recommendations for the Czech Presidency – was presented on 27-28 June in Prague to senior representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as to members of the Czech Parliament. The report was also discussed with experts from Czech think tanks Sinopsis and the European Values for Security Policy.

[Click here to read ICT and Czechs Support Tibet's briefing paper for the Czech EU Presidency.](#)

## 8<sup>TH</sup> WORLD PARLIAMENTARIANS CONVENTION ON TIBET HELD IN WASHINGTON DC

ON 22-23 JUNE, PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM AROUND THE WORLD GATHERED IN WASHINGTON DC FOR THE 8<sup>TH</sup> WORLD PARLIAMENTARIANS CONVENTION ON TIBET (WPCT) ORGANIZED BY THE TIBETAN PARLIAMENT-IN-EXILE.

The two-day convention, which aims to strengthen and coordinate support to Tibet by parliamentarians from different countries, was attended by over 100 participants from 28 countries. These included members of parliaments, officials from the Tibetan government in exile, Tibet experts and members of Tibet Support Groups as well as prominent world politicians and leaders.

After an inaugural session graced by a video message from the Dalai Lama and a number of addresses – including by Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi and ICT Chairman Richard Gere – participants took part in panel discussions on topics. These included 'Narratives on Tibet: The Need for Change', 'Significance of Asia & Tibet in Global Warming and Climate Change' and 'Sharing Experiences, Collaborations, Networking & Action Plans amongst like-minded countries'.

The convention concluded with the adoption of the Washington Declaration, which notes how the war in Ukraine has highlighted "the urgent need to enforce international law and prioritize safeguarding the rule of law and the promotion of freedom, democracy, self-determination and human rights throughout the world" and announces the revival of

the International Network of Parliamentarians on Tibet (INPaT).

This WPCT followed seven previous conventions held in New Delhi (1994), Vilnius (1995), Washington DC (1997), Edinburgh (2005), Rome (2009), Ottawa (2012) and Riga (2019).

[Click here to read the Declaration adopted by the 8<sup>th</sup> WPCT.](#)



ICT Chairman Richard Gere speaks at the 8<sup>th</sup> World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet on 22 June. (Photo: TPiE)

## US TIBET COORDINATOR MEETS DALAI LAMA, TIBETANS IN INDIA AND NEPAL

THE US SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR TIBETAN ISSUES UZRA ZEYA MET THE TIBETAN LEADERSHIP, EXPERIENCED TIBETAN CULTURE AND SENT A MESSAGE TO CHINA ABOUT US SUPPORT FOR TIBET DURING HER TRIP TO INDIA AND NEPAL LAST MAY.



US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Uzra Zeya meets with the Dalai Lama at his residence in Dharamsala, India in May. (Photo: Tenzin Choejor)

the Dalai Lama. She expressed greetings from the American president and people, and gratitude for his message of peace for the world. The US government has made clear in recent years that Tibet is of core interest to the United States, with US leaders pushing China to resume negotiations with Tibetan representatives after more than a decade without dialogue.

traveled to Nepal where she met with the Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and other senior government officials, as well as members of the Tibetan refugee community.

It was Zeya's first visit to Dharamsala since becoming Special Coordinator in December 2021 amid growing momentum in the US for support of the Tibetan people. The trip followed the visit of the Sikyong to Washington DC in April, where he engaged top US officials – including Uzra Zeya and Nancy Pelosi – and built crucial support for Tibet. The Sikyong [also met with Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavský](#), who tweeted that, like Tibet, his country “experienced what it was like to live under the influence of a superpower and to be deprived of human rights.”

One of the highlights of her 18-19 May visit to Dharamsala – headquarters of the Tibetan government in exile – was a meeting with

Zeya also met Sikyong Penpa Tsering and other Tibetan leaders as well as civil servants, schoolchildren, monastics, artists and ordinary Tibetans. She later

## EU REPORT HIGHLIGHTS RESTRICTIONS ON TIBETAN CULTURE, ACCESS

IN ITS 2021 REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD, THE EUROPEAN UNION HAS HIGHLIGHTED THE CONTINUING REPRESSIVE POLICIES OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT IN TIBET.

The [report](#), released on 19 April, summarizes the main issues regarding human rights in China, including the limitation of civil society space, the restrictions on media freedom and access to information, as well as the use of enforced disappearances, secret detentions and torture. It also notes that religious activities continued to take place under the supervision of the Chinese Communist Party and emphasizes the Chinese government's violations of the rights of Uyghurs, Tibetans and Inner Mongolians, as well as the “severe democratic setback” in Hong Kong.

On Tibet more specifically, the EU notes that the Chinese government continued to implement similar policies as those implemented in Xinjiang, severely limiting Tibetan culture, language and identity.

It underlines the continuous control on the religious practice of Tibetan Buddhists as well as the detention, torture and death of Tibetan monks and rights activists and restriction of Tibetan language teaching. The report also recalls the lack of access to the Tibet Autonomous Region, which “was possible only for controlled visits of official delegations or tourist groups.”

The EU's report came out a few days after the EU and China held their 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Summit on 1 April. While the online meeting largely focused on the war in Ukraine and did not produce any major breakthrough on the many areas of disagreement between the two partners and rivals, human rights were on the agenda for the first time. This was at the request of the

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EU, and following a [letter](#) from the International Campaign for Tibet and other groups ahead of the meeting urging EU leaders to dedicate adequate time at the meeting to discuss China's human rights abuses. In his [remarks](#) following the Summit, EU Council President Michel said: "We raised our concerns about China's treatment of minorities in Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia, and of the people of Tibet (...)".

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, European Council President Charles Michel at the press conference following the EU-China Summit on 1 April. (Photo: European Union)

## POLITICAL PRISONER FOCUS

### GENDUN LHUNDRUB

THE TIBETAN WRITER AND POET GENDUN LHUNDRUB, WHO WAS HELD INCOMMUNICADO FOR MORE THAN A YEAR AFTER HIS ARREST IN 2020, IS SAID TO BE CURRENTLY DETAINED IN A PRISON IN CHINA'S QINGHAI PROVINCE.



"We have learned that Gendun Lhundrub whose whereabouts remained unknown until now is being detained at a detention center in Siling" (in Chinese, Xining), a Tibetan who lives inside the Tibet Autonomous Region [told Radio Free Asia](#).

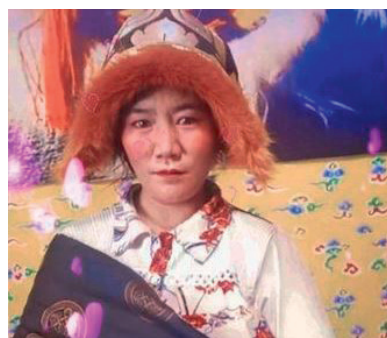
"However, his family members are still not allowed to see him, and no information about his condition has been revealed."

Lhundrub, a former monk at Rongwo monastery in Rebgong (Tongren) county in the Malho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, was arrested on 2 December 2020 en route to a religious debate in Rebgong. He had long been monitored by authorities for signs of political dissent. Lhundrub's family was informed in September 2021 that his trial would soon be held, but have not heard anything since, according to a second Tibetan in exile.

Lhundrub is reportedly undergoing political re-education, for which he must translate Tibetan Buddhist scripts into Mandarin Chinese.

### RELEASE OF NORZIN WANGMO

CHINESE AUTHORITIES HAVE RELEASED TIBETAN POLITICAL PRISONER NORZIN WANGMO BEFORE THE COMPLETION OF HER PRISON SENTENCE AND IN VERY POOR HEALTH, TIBETAN MEDIA REPORTED LAST MAY.



"Norzin Wangmo was unexpectedly released on 2 May from a prison in Kyegudo," a Tibetan living in exile [told RFA](#). "Because of severe torture and ill-treatment in prison, she can barely stand up on her feet." According to reports, Wangmo's whole body

was bruised and covered with injuries sustained during continuous beatings with an electric baton. She is being treated at home as she is not allowed to visit hospitals for treatment, and continues to be under surveillance, the source said.

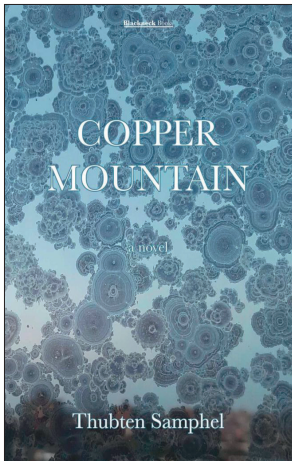
Norzin Wangmo, a mother of three, was arrested in 2020 and later sentenced in secret by the Chumarleb People's Court to three years in prison for sharing information with Tibetans in exile about the self-immolation of Tenzin Sherab in May 2013. Despite multiple requests, her family was not allowed to visit her in prison.

In recent years, there have been numerous cases of Tibetan political prisoners being sent home before the end of their prison term because of their deteriorating health resulting from their ill treatment in detention.



## READING SUGGESTION

### COPPER MOUNTAIN, BY THUBTEN SAMPHEL



A mega mining corporation plans to excavate the foremost holy mountain on the Roof of the World. Though backed by the full apparatus of the colonial power, the miners and their state-of-the-art equipment are outfaced by a small group of multi-cultural meditators armed with nothing but ancient wisdom and courage. How does this battle involving murder, intrigue, denouncement, co-option and spiritual endurance end? Copper Mountain deals with the devastating environmental issues now facing Tibet and the world, and the crucial politics surrounding reincarnation. Centered on Mt. Kailash, a sacred

location for Buddhists, Hindus and Jains, Thubten Samphel's novel is a sharp meditation on a culture that nurtured its environment and resisted assaults by a resource-hungry authoritarian state.

*This book was published by Blackneck Books, an imprint of TibetWrites, a Tibetan writers' circle that publishes and promotes the creative work of Tibetans. [Click here to visit the TibetWrites website and see all titles.](https://www.facebook.com/events/698700424618958/)*

*To order, please email: [blackneckbooks@tibetwrites.in](mailto:blackneckbooks@tibetwrites.in).*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **2-4 SEPTEMBER:** 21<sup>st</sup> Cultural Festival of Tibet and of Himalayan Peoples in Paris (more info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/698700424618958/>)
- **13 SEPTEMBER-7 OCTOBER:** 51<sup>st</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council
- **24-27 OCTOBER:** FIDH World Congress in Paris