



Tibet Society Newsletter

August 2018

"If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito"
His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

News of the Tibet Society, what's happening in Tibet and the Tibetan Exile world, and news of His Holiness the Dalai

Tibet Groups Slam Google



The Tibet Society has joined a [coalition](#) of 170 Tibet groups from around the world in [writing to Google](#), demanding it abandon its plans to develop a censored search engine app in China.

Google withdrew from China in 2010, refusing to conform to China's demands that it self-censor its content. It has now emerged that Google intends to set up a project codenamed *Dragonfly* to comply with China's strict censorship rules and which will lead to Google censoring content pertaining to human rights, Tibet, Tiananmen, democracy and His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

In their letter addressed to Google CEO Sundar Pichai

and dated August 22, the rights groups expressed their deep concern over the human rights implications of Google's censorship plans. They want to see Google implement comprehensive measures to ensure the company does not compromise on its principles in order to maximise profits.

"Google must not turn a blind eye to the human rights violations being committed by the Chinese authorities nor act as an extension of China's government by actively implementing its repressive policies. Project *Dragonfly* is not just an attack on Tibetans and Chinese citizens, but an all-out assault on internet freedom everywhere," said Gloria Montgomery, Head of Advocacy and Campaigns at Tibet Society.

The letter continues, "There is little doubt that *Dragonfly* would have an immense negative impact on

the human rights of Chinese citizens [who] deserve an undivided internet and free access to information."

Today the Chinese government runs one of the most repressive internet censorship regimes in the world and extensive monitoring of the internet in China has resulted in hundreds of people being arrested and imprisoned for discussing democracy and human rights online, as part of a wider effort to crush all forms of peaceful online dissent. This is particularly relevant in Tibet where, according to conservative estimates, there are at least 2,000 political prisoners.

Freedom of expression, online and offline, is virtually non-existent in Tibet and the strict internet censorship there serves to hide from the outside world the ongoing and large-scale human rights abuses committed against the Tibetan people.

Water Pressure

There is room for hope in our [campaign](#) against Liverpool Football Club (LFC) and its sponsorship deal with the Chinese company Tibet Water. We, supported by Liverpool fans as well as Tibet groups worldwide, have been lobbying the Club to persuade them that supporting China's exploitation of the Tibetan people, resources and environment is contrary to the ethos of the Club and not good for their image or future. We have made attempts to meet the club's directors but they have never responded.

Since the sponsorship deal was signed in July last year, Tibet Water appeared in every one of LFC's match programmes alongside the other sponsors right through the 2017-2018 football season. However, as you can see in the photograph below, the programme on the opening match of this season does not feature Tibet Water.

We believe there is a real possibility that this means that the sponsorship deal has been quietly retired. Due to the continued silence from the club's directors, we cannot confirm this is the case, nor the extent to which this decision was due to public pressure.



Tashi Wangchuk: Still Inside



The Tibet Society has joined other Tibet groups to issue a [statement](#) concerning the Tibetan language advocate and high-profile political prisoner Tashi Wangchuk who remains in jail in China despite never having committed a crime and despite the worldwide campaign by Tibet and human rights groups and statements by governments

and the United Nations.

His appeal on 13th August was turned down. Tashi's lawyer Liang Xiaojun tweeted: "The second instance of Tashi Wangchuk's case was announced in Yushu City Detention Centre on 13th August. His family was not allowed to hear the sentence. The adjudication from Qinghai High Court was received recently, and both the argument from Tashi Wangchuk himself and the defending statement from the lawyers were not accepted at all. The second instance has upheld the same sentence.

After the trial, Tashi Wangchuk was allowed to meet his family."

Tashi Wangchuk, 33, carried out a peaceful campaign to urge the Chinese government to ensure that every Tibetan had access to education in their native Tibetan language – [their right according to the Chinese constitution](#). He presented his case in a news article and [video documentary](#) published by the *New York Times* in late 2015 and was arrested in January 2016.

There are an estimated 2,000 [Tibetan political prisoners](#) in jail.

Tibet News



Democracy Under China?



We hear much evidence of the absence of any form of democracy in Tibet. How is it for others living under the Chinese regime? What are their hopes and aspirations? [Activist Andy Chan](#) spoke to the Foreign Correspondents Club in Hong Kong, which went ahead to a packed audience despite pressure from Beijing to abort the event, saying “[Independence is the only path to democracy](#)”.

Chan spoke about the Hong Kong National Party, founded by him and his friends in 2016, with “Hong Kong independence” clearly stated as one of its central goals. The National Party was instantly demonised as an extremist group but, he said, it wanted what many Hong Kongers wish for: the dream of democracy, here, in our home, Hong Kong. Extracts from his speech follow.

The truth is that a democracy is nothing if final, ultimate power does not rest with the people. If Hong Kong were to become truly democratic, Hong Kong’s sovereignty must rest with the people of Hong Kong. And there is only one way to achieve this: independence.

The nature of China is oppression. Look at East Turkestan [Xinjiang]; look at Tibet. Nations forced to follow, or face the penalty of death. We have seen Peking betraying the Seventeen Point Agreement with Tibet; and have we seen Peking betraying the Sino-British Joint Declaration, leaving us Hong Kongers with less and less freedom. Not only have we failed to attain truly democratic elections, we are also marching ever closer to a dictatorship with Chinese characteristics.

The Hong Kong government now serves not the interests of the Hong Kong people, nor those who have dealings with us, but only the interests alone of Peking [Beijing].

The Hong Kong National Party hopes that the international community can objectively review the imperialistic threat that is coming from China.

Military Training

Reports are coming in that children in Tibet are being subjected to mandatory military training by the ruling Chinese regime. *Voice of Tibet* radio has reported that a four-week training began on 18th August at a Lhasa city school, with children as young as nine years old taking part. The training includes handling of firearms and is taking place at schools across Tibet.

Tomb Raiders Arrested

16 people have been arrested in Lhasa’s Dhagze district on charges of robbing tombs and stealing relics from the ruins of temples in Lhasa. The gang is said to have taken advantage of the destruction of old buildings to make way for commercial development, and robbed the tombs and monasteries which are known to hold valuable antiques. 53 cultural relics have now been recovered from those arrested.

Two Released

Two Tibetans have been released from prison on completion of their sentences for “inciting separatism”. Namkha Jam from Changya Village in Rebong County in Qinghai Province was released on 20th August after his six-year term for sharing information and pictures of self-immolations and Gonpo Tseten, 40, was released one and half years early for good behaviour. He was sentenced to 12 years for his part in the 2008 uprising.

Indian Independence Day

Sikyong Lobsang Sangay, President of the Central Tibetan Administration, raised the Indian flag in Dharamshala at a ceremony to celebrate India’s 72nd Independence Day on 15th August. “This country has done more for Tibetans than any other country. Hence the generous and loving people of India deserves our congratulations and Happy Independence Day” said Dr Sangay.

Safe Arrival in India

[Eight Tibetan refugees](#) – mostly monks and nuns – who were being held in Nepal while on their way to India have reached Dharamshala hoping to further their education. Nepalese immigration cited “security concerns” as their reason for holding the group. Their exit from Nepal was negotiated by an informal agreement between Nepal, India and the

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. China is increasingly putting pressure on the Nepalese authorities to prevent Tibetans from escaping via Nepal.

Another Prisoner Freed

Namkha Jam, 56, who has been in jail for six years, was freed on 15th August and has returned home to Jangkya village in the Malho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture’s Rebong county. He was convicted of “inciting separatism” for sending photographs of self-immolation protests out of Tibet. Prior to his arrest, Namkha Jam worked as a teacher for 30 years. He will now face three years deprivation of political rights.

Shoton Festival

The Shoton - or yoghurt - festival is underway at the Drepung and Sera monasteries in Lhasa, with thousands of Tibetans and tourists arriving to take part. The festival kicked off with the monks unfurling a giant 500 year old thangka displaying an image of the Buddha Shakyamuni. The Shoton festival originated in the 11th century, and is now a weeklong celebration of both secular and religious events.

Chinese Leader Visits Tibet

Wang Yang, the fourth ranking official of the Communist Party of China (CPC), visited Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, where he spoke of the CPC’s need to “fight against separatist elements and activities”. The Indian *Hindu* newspaper reported that the CPC’s “tactics in Tibet are largely aimed at reducing the influence of the region’s spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama”. The CPC has labelled the Dalai Lama a “dangerous separatist”.

Demolishing Properties

The Chinese authorities in Qinghai province are demolishing guest houses, shops and restaurants built by Tibetans near Qinghai Lake (or Tso Ngongpo in Tibetan) for tourists, resulting in severe financial losses for those affected. Similar campaigns are being undertaken in Tsoilho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of northwest Qinghai in the name of protecting environment. Locals fear their homes will also be destroyed and that the land released will be exploited for commercial gain.





Tibet Society News

Julian Bound, Photographer

We are very excited to announce that [Julian Bound](#) will be working closely with the Tibet Society over the coming months. Julian is a documentary photographer and author who

DEDICATED TO
THE PEOPLE OF TIBET



has featured on the BBC news, *National Geographic* and in the international press. He has spent time studying meditation with the Buddhist monks of northern Thailand and with spiritual teachers of India's Himalaya region and his work focuses on the social documentary of world culture, religion and traditions. In the past he has documented the soldiers of

the Burmese Karen National Liberation Army, the Arab spring of 2011, Cairo, Egypt, and the Thailand political uprisings of 2009 and 2014 in Bangkok.

Julian has extensively photographed the Tibetan refugee camps of Nepal and India. His other projects include the road working gypsies of India, the Dharavi slums of Mumbai, the rail track slums of Jakarta and the sulphur miners at work in the active volcanoes of eastern Java, Indonesia. He was present in Nepal at the time of the earthquakes there in 2015.

Julian has recently published a photography book, *Tibetan*, which documents the daily life of Tibetan people living in Tibet, India and Nepal.

Find out more about Julian on his website, or [buy his books](#) from Amazon.

Both photographs by Julian Bound.



Raising the Flag!

Local Tibetan residents of Waltham Forest will be raising the Tibetan flag at their Town Hall on 3rd September to celebrate our Tibetan unique culture. The Mayor of the London Borough of Waltham Forest, Sally Littlejohn, will be there to support the event with councillor Kastriot Berberi, who has worked with the Tibetan Community in Britain and the Office of to make this happen. We will sing the Tibetan national anthem while we raise the flag and there will be a cultural programme and Tibetan refreshments.

We are delighted that a major London borough is prepared to grant a platform to host such an event. Do join us at Waltham Forest Town Hall, Forest Road, Walthamstow, E17 4JF from 11:00am-12.30pm, 3rd September.

The UN Puts Pressure on China

United Nations experts on racial discrimination [have urged the Chinese government](#) to review policies and laws that discriminate against Tibetans, Uyghurs and Mongols. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination made this recommendation following its review of China at a hearing earlier this month in Geneva.

The committee's recommendations highlighted torture and ill-treatment against ethnic groups, the use of anti-terror and anti-separatism laws to stifle dissent and the diminishing space for civil society in China. The committee also issued detailed recommendations with regard to the human rights of Mongols, Tibetans and Uyghurs.

The committee said China should "strengthen measures to prevent acts of torture and ill-treatment committed against members of ethnic minorities". The committee expressed its concern "that the broad definition of terrorism and vague references to extremism and unclear definition of separatism in Chinese legislation, could have the potential to criminalise peaceful civic and religious expression and facilitate criminal profiling of ethnic and ethno-religious minorities, including Muslim Uyghurs and Buddhist Tibetans and Mongolians."

The International Campaign for Tibet has published a shadow [report](#) with additional information about the paternalistic attitudes of the Chinese authorities toward Tibetans and about the discriminatory policies in place in Tibet. ICT responded to questions by the experts during an interactive dialogue and ICT's President Matteo Mecacci said "The UN experts have sent a clear message to China to review and stop its discriminatory policies in Tibet and elsewhere. The international community must call on Beijing to respect basic standards of international human rights."

The Chinese delegation flatly denied its systematic discrimination against Tibetans and Uyghurs.

Tibet Society Interns

Tibet Society has organised the first ever parliamentary internship programme for Tibetans in the UK. Thupten Thupten is well into his time with the Office of Chris Law, MP for Dundee West, and will be sharing his experiences in next month's newsletter.

The Tibet Society, the world's first Tibet support group, was founded in 1959. Funded by its members, it has been working for over 50 years to seek justice for Tibet through parliamentary lobbying, campaigns and actions.

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