

Imprisonment, Torture and Discrimination

Imprisonment and Torture

The use of imprisonment and torture continue to be an integral part of China's effort to suppress opposition to Chinese rule in Tibet.

The length of the average sentence of Tibetan prisoners of conscience is increasing, according to a 2006 CECC report. The average sentence of all Tibetan political prisoners in detention in 2006 is 10 years, 11 months.

Torture takes place on a wide scale in prisons and detention centers throughout Tibet. Torture not only constitutes kickings and beatings, but also exists in more sophisticated forms of mistreatment, which leave no visible marks, such as exposure to extreme temperatures.

Discrimination

Chinese laws are implemented to maintain a united Chinese state rather than to prohibit inequalities. The Chinese government enforces the longstanding ethnocentric Chinese view of Tibetans as backward and in need of Chinese assistance. Tibetans are faced with the choice of assimilating and relinquishing their Tibetan identity, religion and culture or facing discrimination.

Tibetans lack access to healthcare, partly due to the concentration of medical facilities in urban areas rather than rural areas where the proportion of Tibetans is greater than Chinese. In education, Tibetan children face many obstacles compared to their Chinese counterparts, including poorly trained teachers, difficult transitions to Chinese-medium secondary schools, and



being subjected to the degrading messages of prejudiced curricula. Tibetans also face discrimination in employment and have less access to training and special business permits. Tibetans compete poorly with Chinese settlers who frequently have the connections needed to expedite the ability to attain permits, government-provided housing or job opportunities.

The International Campaign for Tibet recommends that:

- China immediately cease its practice of torture and abide by the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment;
- China release all Tibetan prisoners of conscience; and that
- Acts of racism and racial discrimination should be prevented and prosecuted by law; victims should have legal redress and perpetrators should face punishment.

Q & A:

Why are Tibetans imprisoned and tortured by China?

The Chinese government views Tibetans who express opposition to Chinese rule or support for the Dalai Lama as a threat to the state. As a result, the Chinese government subjects Tibetans to imprisonment and torture in order to quell any signs of dissent.

What kinds of torture are Tibetans subjected to?

Forms of torture include kickings and beatings, applying electric shocks to sensitive areas such as the genitals and mouth; placing heated objects on skin; using self-tightening handcuffs; and placing prisoners in confinement cells and in extreme isolation for long periods.

How you can help...

1. Write to Manfred Nowak, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, expressing your concern for Tibetan political prisoners.
2. Take action to support current political prisoners by going to: www.savetibet.org/action.
3. Join the ICT Action Network to receive regular updates and calls for action by going to www.savetibet.org/enews.