



# Tibet Watch Annual Review 2007 – 2008

## Statement from the Chair

The need for Tibet Watch was demonstrated all too clearly in a year that ended with Tibet in turmoil with the authorities all but closing down the country making communication and information gathering ever more challenging.

This year saw Tibet Watch quietly establishing itself as a reliable source of information and analysis on the human rights situation in Tibet. Our first in-depth report, *No faith in the state*, on the constraints and interference in religious life in Tibet was published in November. Our work also formed the basis for a report, *Forked Tongue: Tibetan Language Under Attack*, released on International Mother Tongue Day. Both these publications, which capture realities from inside Tibet, received widespread international coverage drawing predictable refutations from the Chinese authorities.

Predictably, the build up to the Olympics brought none of the promised 'freedoms' for the international press to travel and report throughout China despite the claims made by both the Chinese regime and the IOC. Once again, the State demonstrated that they are happy to acquiesce to obligations in this case those laid down by the IOC, to achieve their own ends but are equally determined willfully to ignore them when it does not suit them. So it was that, for independent journalists, Tibet remained effectively out of reach to all but the most intrepid.

The intransigence of the Chinese authorities and their determination to prevent people witnessing what is happening inside Tibet means that our work will remain a vital factor in monitoring and recording human rights there.

We are grateful to the individuals and Trusts who have faith in and have supported our work. We continue to need resources to build our team of experts, researchers and analysts and this will continue to be a focus in the task to which we are committed – allowing Tibetan voices to have a part in the international debate about their future.

**Sue Byrne – Chair**

**Tibet Watch Trustees:**

Sue Byrne, Chair; Tsering D Gonkatsang; Tsering Topgyal; Daniel Russell

# About Tibet Watch

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Tibet Watch provides accurate information and research about the human rights violations in Tibet, for the purposes of educating people and engaging in the promotion of human rights for the Tibetan people.

Tibet Watch was established to obtain and disseminate reliable information on the human rights situation in Tibet, which includes the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) as well as areas of Gansu, Qinghai and Sichuan provinces considered by Tibetans to be part of Tibet. The combination of Tibet's isolation, China's occupation of Tibet and the control of information make this an increasingly difficult task.

Tibet Watch researchers gather and source information, conduct analysis, write and publish up-to-date and groundbreaking briefing materials for distribution to as wide an audience as possible. Tibet Watch also commissions in-depth research and analysis on relevant topics relating to Tibetans' human rights in Tibet.

Tibet Watch works in close co-operation with Free Tibet.

The year saw a consolidation of Tibet Watch's work with a new team of Tibetan researchers recruited and trained, and a growing reputation for producing reliable and accurate information about human rights in Tibet.

Tibet Watch aims to promote the human rights of the Tibetan people by:

- monitoring abuses of Tibetan peoples' human rights
- raising awareness and educating the public about the human rights of Tibetan people
- providing technical advice to governments and others on human rights matters relating to the Tibetan people
- promoting public support for the human rights of Tibetan people
- promoting respect for human rights of Tibetan people among individuals and corporations
- international advocacy of human rights for the Tibetan people

# Tibet Watch achievements

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## Tibet Watch reports

### No faith in the state

Tibet Watch released the report *No faith in the state* on 10 December 2007, to mark International Human Rights Day. The 70 page report provided a detailed investigation into the current government control on religious practices and institutions in Tibet concentrating on the period between 2005 and 2008. The report's content was based on first hand testimonies from Tibetans as well as an analysis of government policy papers.

The report was widely distributed to key opinion formers as well as via the new website [www.tibetwatch.org](http://www.tibetwatch.org) being well received and creating widespread international media interest. The day after its launch a journalist from Reuters pressed the Foreign Ministry on religious freedom in Tibet at their weekly press briefings in Beijing. Spokesperson Qin Gang dismissed the findings of *No faith in the state*, stating 'their lies are too many' indicating the Chinese Foreign Ministry was aware of the report's content.

### Special report

As part of its aim to provide detailed advice on Tibetan human rights matters, Tibet Watch published a paper written by Andrew Fischer, then Teaching Fellow at the London School of Economics, titled *Perversities of Extreme Dependence and Unequal Growth in the TAR*. Using official Chinese statistics, the report cited the rapid growth that has been generated in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) through the extremely heavy government spending and investment strategies of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

His analysis, based on official government statistics and supplemented with observations from the ground, revealed that the majority of Tibetans are increasingly marginalised from this growth. This is due to extreme and inefficient dependence on government sources of finance from outside the province (mostly from Beijing), together with the fact that such finance continues to be

targeted at urban areas and sectors where Tibetans have the hardest time competing with Chinese migrants.

## Gathering evidence on key issues

Tibet Watch was commissioned by Free Tibet to provide content for two briefing papers: *Forked tongue* published for the UN's International Mother Tongue Day on 21 February 2008; *Revealing the Truth* detailed the anti- Dalai Lama campaign by the Chinese authorities was published immediately prior to the Dalai Lama's visit to Britain in May 2008.

For both these briefing papers Tibet Watch gathered personal testimonies and witness statements from Tibetans on the topic in hand.

Media from the UK to the US to Australia picked up *Forked tongue* and reported its call for legislation to make Tibetan the official language of the Tibetan Autonomous Region.



Tibetan nomad

## Raising public awareness

Tibet Watch provided a stream of topical and corroborated information about abuses of human rights in Tibet throughout the year. Most of these were based on witness statements. Others came from searches of Chinese and Tibetan websites or documents obtained from Tibet.

These were used as the basis of media reports, which were published in the UK and international media. One such example was an ITN broadcast on 23 October 2007, of a special report filmed undercover in Tibet focusing on the crackdown following the Dalai Lama's Congressional Gold Medal Award. They worked closely with Tibet Watch who sourced video material of the 'secret' celebrations in Tibet for the award, which was featured in the broadcast. These events were also reported in *The Guardian* the same day.

The year ended with a flurry of activity for Tibet Watch as it was at forefront of breaking information and photos from Tibet as protests began in March in Lhasa and then spread across the Tibetan Plateau. This work was vital in presenting an accurate picture of the nature and extent of the uprisings and the unprecedented repression that immediately followed the protests in Tibet.

During this period, Tibet Watch sourced and published reliable information on an almost daily basis on the unfolding events in Tibet. This information was distributed widely to the media internationally as well as other to Tibet and Human Rights NGOs through Free Tibet.

Specifically, Tibet Watch was the first organisation to report the killing of up to 34 people near Kirti monastery in Ngaba County, which received widespread print and television coverage. Photos of victims were also sourced by Tibet Watch, and were broadcast on television news programmes including the BBC and ITV.

Tibet Watch sourced information was used widely throughout the year in promoting the human rights of Tibetans to key decision makers from the Prime Minister to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to key politicians in the UK and EU Parliaments and to religious leaders in the UK.

Updates provided by Tibet Watch on the welfare of political prisoners were included in Free Tibet's brief to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in advance of the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue in January 2008. Tibet Watch materials have been used by Tibet NGOs in Europe.

## Treasurer's report and accounts

We continued to receive support from a number of Trusts and generous individual donors.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the following funders:

John Armitage  
Naysmith Trust  
Samuel Storey Family Charitable Trust  
Dovehouse Trust  
Paget Trust  
Body Shop Foundation

Opening balance (1 April 2007)	<b>£19,390</b>
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### Incoming resources

Trust grants	£2,500
Individual donation and legacies	£9,841
Other	£667
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>£13,008</u></b>

### Outgoing resources

Education and Awareness	£15,062
Fundraising	£0
Governance	£1,700
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>£16,762</u></b>

These financial statements were prepared in accordance with relevant accounting standards, the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued by the Charity Commissioners in March 2005, and Companies Act 1985 relating to small companies. A signed copy of the accounts is available from Tibet Watch.

Tibet was a country the size of Western Europe when Chinese forces invaded in 1950. Since the Chinese occupation, large portions of the country have been absorbed into provinces of the People's Republic of China.

Hundreds of thousands of Tibetans have been executed, imprisoned and tortured and human rights abuses remain widespread. Tibet's unique culture, religion and environment are in danger of being wiped out.

## **Vision**

**Tibet Watch is working towards a Tibet where fundamental human rights are assured and where Tibetans exercise their rights to religious, cultural and political freedom and economic opportunity free from fear and discrimination.**

## **Mission**

**Tibet Watch promotes the human rights of the Tibetan people by providing accurate information about the situation in Tibet, for the purposes of public education, raising awareness of the situation in Tibet and informing international advocacy on behalf of the Tibetan people.**

## **Values**

**Tibet Watch is independent of all governments, including the Tibetan Government in exile, and all other organisations and groups. It works in close co-operation with Free Tibet.**

We believe in exposing the human rights abuses in Tibet and, by so doing, building worldwide solidarity for the human rights of the Tibetan people to be respected, so that Tibetans will live in freedom.

For more information about Tibet Watch see: [www.tibetwatch.org](http://www.tibetwatch.org) or write to the address below or email [mail@tibetwatch.org](mailto:mail@tibetwatch.org)



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