



Crackdown in Kardze (August 2014)

Tibet Watch Thematic Report
November 2014

Crackdown in Kardze (August 2014)

Thematic report commissioned by Free Tibet
Copyright © 2014 Tibet Watch
All rights reserved.



Tibet Watch works to promote the human rights of the Tibetan people through monitoring, research and advocacy. We are a UK registered charity (no. 1114404) with an office in London and a field office in Dharamsala, India. We believe in the power of bearing witness, the power of truth.

www.tibetwatch.org

Contents

Introduction	1
Timeline.....	2
Background	3
Peaceful protests and crackdown	5
Mass arrests and death in detention	7
China’s façade of happiness in Tibet.....	9
Appendix 1: List of people affected by the crackdown	11
Appendix 2: Lhasa Consensus – full text.....	13

Introduction

A peaceful Tibetan protest was brutally suppressed and the crowd fired upon by security forces in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP) on 12 August 2014. The Tibetans involved were protesting the arbitrary arrest of a local village leader, Wangdak, who had been detained the previous evening. This was the beginning of a series of events that was to have a devastating impact on Wangdak's immediate family – including five male relatives being shot, three of whom subsequently died in detention, and one female relative suffering brain damage as a result of torture.

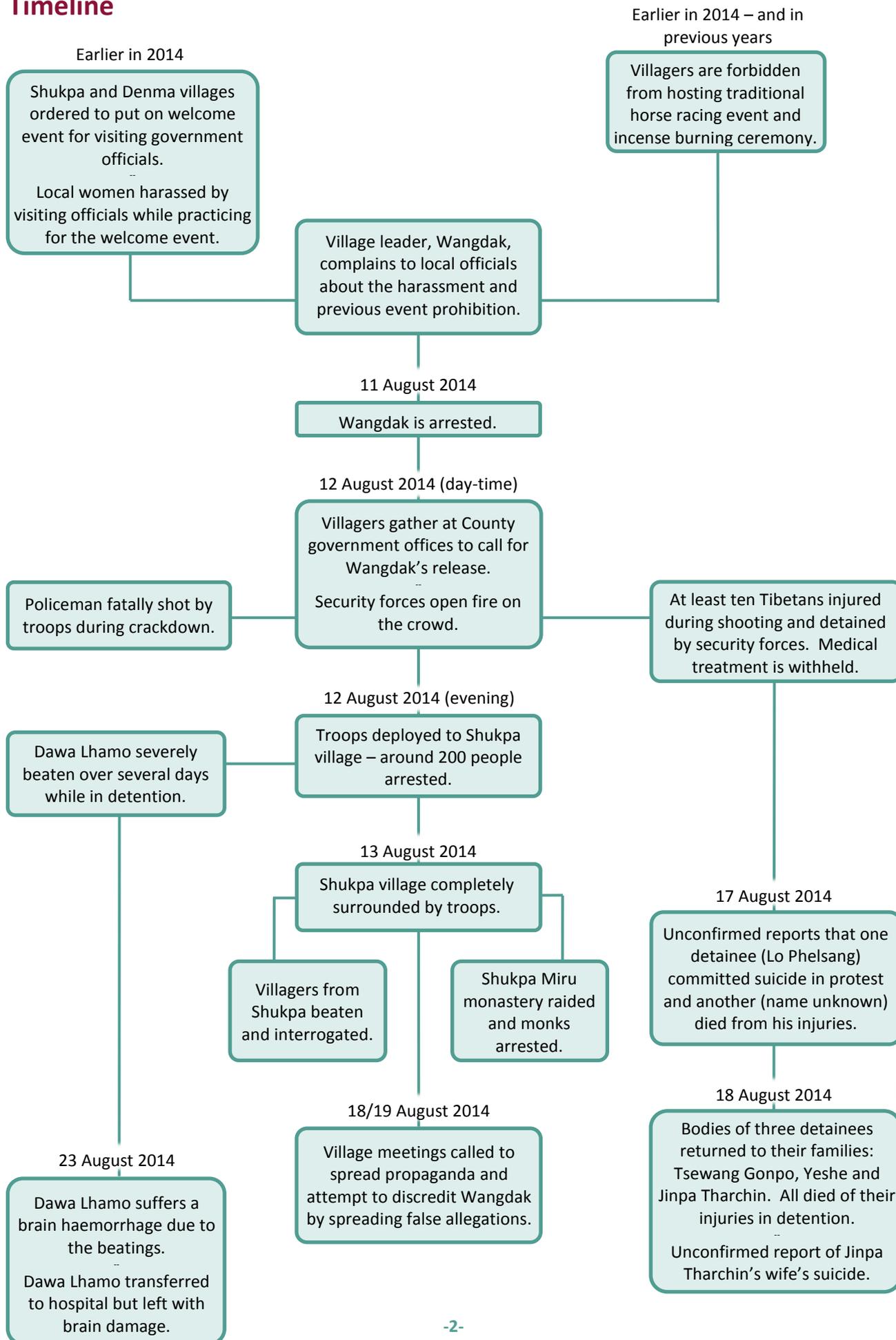
Tibet Watch received information about the events in Kardze TAP at the time. The information was published by our campaign partner, Free Tibet, and also disseminated to the international media.

Due to the nature of the political situation in Tibet, there are risks and challenges involved in passing information to the outside world. In the aftermath of a protest, or similar incident, it is even more difficult – and also dangerous for the individuals involved. Internet and telephone lines are often cut and the security forces deal harshly with anyone they suspect of passing on information.

It is natural, under such circumstances, for information to take a long time to be passed on and also for misunderstandings or misinformation to circulate. For this reason, Tibet Watch continues to monitor all areas where incidents have occurred and seeks to obtain updates and clarifications once communication lines have been restored and security forces have withdrawn. Even when the troops are gone, people often fear ongoing surveillance and it can take some time for confidence and normal communication to resume. However, Tibet Watch believes it is of paramount importance for research groups to clarify misinformation and to provide a clear picture of events that take place in Tibet, even if the clarifications come some time after the incidents take place.

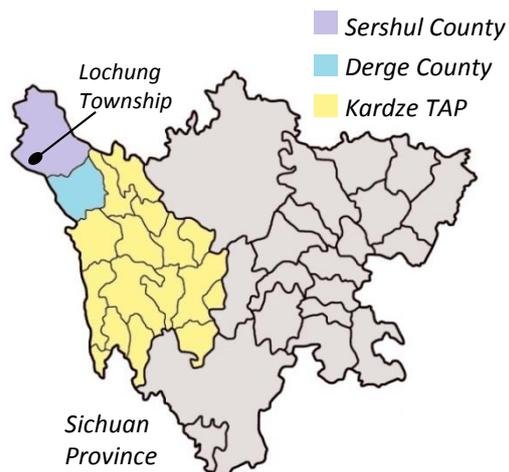
The situation in Kardze TAP remains tense, even though more than three months have passed since village leader Wangdak's arrest and disappearance. It is still extremely difficult to obtain reliable information from the area but Tibet Watch has received some recent updates, which are included in this report. In addition to the updates, this report provides a comprehensive overview of the events in Kardze TAP, their impact on the local community, especially Wangdak's family, and also commentary on the wider context.

Timeline



Background

Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), now part of Sichuan Province, is located in the eastern part of Tibet, in the area traditionally known as Kham. Kardze TAP administers 18 counties. The events covered in this report took place in Sershul County, traditionally known to Tibetans as being part of the Derge area. Tibetan resistance to Chinese rule has always been strong in Kham and, over the years, Tibetans in Kardze TAP have been at the sharp end of China's hard line policies, including anti-Dalai Lama campaigns and strict monastery controls as well as disadvantageous economic policies and environmentally damaging activity from Chinese mining companies.¹



Sichuan Province in relation to China and the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR)

Protests in Kardze TAP

In April 2008, at a time when protests against Chinese rule were taking place all over Tibet, eight Tibetan protesters, including three women and one monk, were shot dead by China's security officials in the monastery town of Thongkor (Ch: Donggu) in Kardze TAP². One month later, in May 2008, 54 nuns from Pangrina Tashi Gephel Ling Nunnery in Kardze County were arrested for peacefully protesting in Kardze town against forced "patriotic re-education" sessions in their nunnery³. The nuns shouted slogans and scattered flyers but were beaten and arrested as they approached the police station. According to witnesses at the time, there was blood on the street following the beatings and some of the nuns' robes and shoes were left lying on the ground after the nuns had been bundled into a police van⁴.

In July 2013, a Tibetan monk was shot in the head and at least six others received gunshot wounds when security forces opened fire on a crowd in Tawu County on 6 July. Several hundred Tibetans, including monks and nuns, had gathered at the sacred Machen Pomra mountain to offer prayers to mark the 78th birthday of the Dalai Lama. At least twenty people were arrested, including some of those injured in the

¹ Tibetans all over Tibet have actively resisted state-led mining activities as the exploitation of Tibetan resources are aimed to generating income for China and meeting Chinese domestic demands rather than supporting Tibetan sustainable development. Mining activities are also environmentally harmful and marginalise the local nomadic and farming communities. Kardze TAP has seen a lot of mining activity, particularly since the 1990s, and Tibetans who resist are detained and, in some cases, imprisoned.

² See *Thonkor killings*, Free Tibet, 4 April 2008: <http://freetibet.org/news-media/pr/040408-thonkor-killings>

³ See *Scores of nuns arrested in Kardze county, Sichuan province, following protests*, Free Tibet, 15 May 2008: <http://freetibet.org/news-media/pr/150508-scores-nuns-arrested-khardze-county-sichuan-province-following-protests>

⁴ See *Kardze nuns update*, Free Tibet, 19 May 2008: <http://freetibet.org/news-media/pr/190508-khardze-nuns-update>

shooting. Many detainees were severely beaten. Later the same day, approximately 3,000 people gathered at Tawu Monastery to protest and appeal to the authorities to release the detainees.⁵

Since the incidents of August 2014, Tibet Watch has received information regarding three solo protests in various areas of Kardze TAP. On 4 October 2014, a 27 year old businessman called Passang Wangchuk was detained by police for a solo protest in Kardze County. Passang Wangchuk was carrying a large banner that demanded human rights for Tibetans, Tibet's freedom, freedom of religion and the Dalai Lama's right to return to Tibet⁶. On 16 October 2014, Doree, a young Tibetan, carried out a solo protest in the main square of Serthar County in Kardze TAP and was immediately arrested⁷. On 26 November 2014, Sonam Yaphel, a 22-year-old Tibetan monk, was arrested after a solo protest on the streets of the Sershul County capital in Kardze TAP⁸.

Self Immolation Protests in Kardze TAP

Since 2011 there have been 7 self-immolation protests by Tibetans in Kardze TAP⁹. Four of the protesters are known to have died:

Name	Date	County	Current Condition
Tinley Namgyal	15 April 2014	Tawu	Deceased
Dolma	29 March 2014	Batang	Unknown
Wangchen Dolma	11 June 2013	Tawu	Deceased
Wangyal	26 November 2012	Serthar	Unknown
Palden Choetso	3 November 2011	Tawu	Deceased
Dawa Tsering	25 October 2011	Kardze	Unknown
Tsewang Norbu	15 August 2011	Tawu	Deceased

⁵ See *Chinese forces open fire on Tibetan prayer gathering*, Free Tibet, 9 July 2013: <http://freetibet.org/news-media/na/chinese-forces-open-fire-tibetan-prayer-gathering>

⁶ See *Protester arrested; writer ill after four year sentence*, Free Tibet, 9 October 2014: <http://freetibet.org/news-media/na/protester-arrested-writer-ill-after-four-year-sentence>

⁷ See *Lone Tibetan protester arrested*, Free Tibet, 17 October, 2014: <http://freetibet.org/news-media/na/lone-tibetan-protester-arrested>

⁸ See *Lone Tibetan protester arrested*, Free Tibet, 28 November 2014: <http://freetibet.org/news-media/na/lone-tibetan-protester-arrested-0>

⁹ For a full list of self-immolation protests since 2009, see: <http://freetibet.org/news-media/na/full-list-self-immolations-tibet>

Peaceful protests and crackdown



Wangdak, around 45 years old, belongs to Shukpa village of Lochung township in the Denma area of Derge, Kardze TAP. He is the village head and main organiser of the Denma horse races.

“Wangdak is a responsible and respected leader in the area, especially about the matters which connected to the welfare of local Tibetans. The local authorities consider him a threat in Tibetan issues because he is the one who dares to take a strong stance for the sake of Tibetan issues such as people’s welfare, Tibetan language and culture. Not only is Wangdak himself strong but local Tibetans listen to him, which is the main cause of raising fear amongst the authorities.”

Ven. Drimey Chamra
Chairman, Derge People's Welfare Association (based in exile)

There were two separate incidents with the authorities which initially led to tension in Sershul County. Earlier in 2014, the people of Shukpa and Denma villages had been ordered to stage a celebration for the visit of senior government officials. The villagers complained that the officials had harassed female members of the community dance troupe while they were practising for the event. Separately, county and prefecture level authorities had declared the Denma horse races and incense-burning ceremonies to be illegal as they were held without permission. Wangdak, the Shukpa village leader, approached the local authorities to discuss both issues. He voiced objection to the way the female dancers had been treated and asked for reasons why the visiting officials had behaved in such a manner. He also argued that the horse races and incense burning ceremonies were important traditional Tibetan festivals. Wangdak asserted that the villagers had a right to follow their own customs and that the authorities should not prevent the holding of these traditional festivals.

On 11 August 2014, Wangdak was arrested as a result of his dispute with the local authorities. Security forces came to his home at midnight and took him into detention.



Protesters in Lochung Township

As news of Wangdak’s arrest spread, local people began to gather. By the next day, 12 August, there were around 100 Tibetans gathered at the local government offices in Lochung Township¹⁰. They demanded to know where Wangdak was being held and also called for his immediate release.

Armed security forces arrived and deployed tear gas and live ammunition. Ten Tibetans were seriously injured. Wangdak’s son, Kunga Sherab, and Wangdak’s brother, Sangpo, suffered two gunshot wounds each and were taken to hospital in Jyegundo (Ch: Yushu). They were denied all medical treatment for several days. Their current condition and whereabouts remain unknown.

Wangdak’s cousin, Yeshe, uncle, Tsewang Gonpo, and brother-in-law, Jinpa Tharchin, were also shot during the protest and later died in detention.

¹⁰ Location: Lochung (Ch: Luoxu) township, Sershul (Ch: Serxu) County, Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) TAP, Sichuan Province

Other injured community members were also taken away by security forces. Although the families were told they were being taken for medical treatment, they were later unable to confirm details of their relatives' condition or location. Communications in the area were also shut down.

During the shootings, a policeman was accidentally shot in the neck by security forces and died. It has not been possible to verify whether the policeman was Chinese or Tibetan.

The following pictures were sent to Tibet Watch and show some of the injuries that protesters sustained during the crackdown. Some of the details have been blurred in order to protect the identity of those involved.



Mass arrests and death in detention

Further arrests took place on the evening of 12 August 2014 and more security forces were deployed in the village. Around 200 people were taken into detention, although it has only been possible to confirm the names of a few – these are included in the list of people affected by the crackdown in Appendix 1. The detained Tibetans were initially kept at Lochung detention centre but, due to the numbers, many of them were later moved to a hospital which was turned into a temporary detention centre. The heads of all detainees were completely shaved after arrest.

By 13 August, Shukpa village was surrounded by approximately 250 troops and security forces. Many of the men of the village had left in order to avoid arrest, assuming that those they left behind would be treated more leniently in their absence. However, the security forces beat and interrogated whoever they could find, including women and children. The local Shukpa Miru monastery was also raided and the monks there were arrested. According to one source, “Shukpa village has around 700 people but it has now been made almost empty, where only children, old people and women are left behind”¹¹.

It was reported in August that protestor Lo Phelsang had committed suicide in detention on 17 August, in protest against the denial of medical treatment for detainees, and that an un-named 22-year-old man had died of his injuries in detention on the same day. Tibet Watch has subsequently received alternative reports which say that Lo Phelsang’s reported suicide did not take place and that Lo Phelsang is still alive. Due to the difficulty of making direct contact with the region, it has not been possible to confirm with absolute certainty which version of events is correct. Tibet Watch has also been unable to verify the information regarding the death of the un-named man.

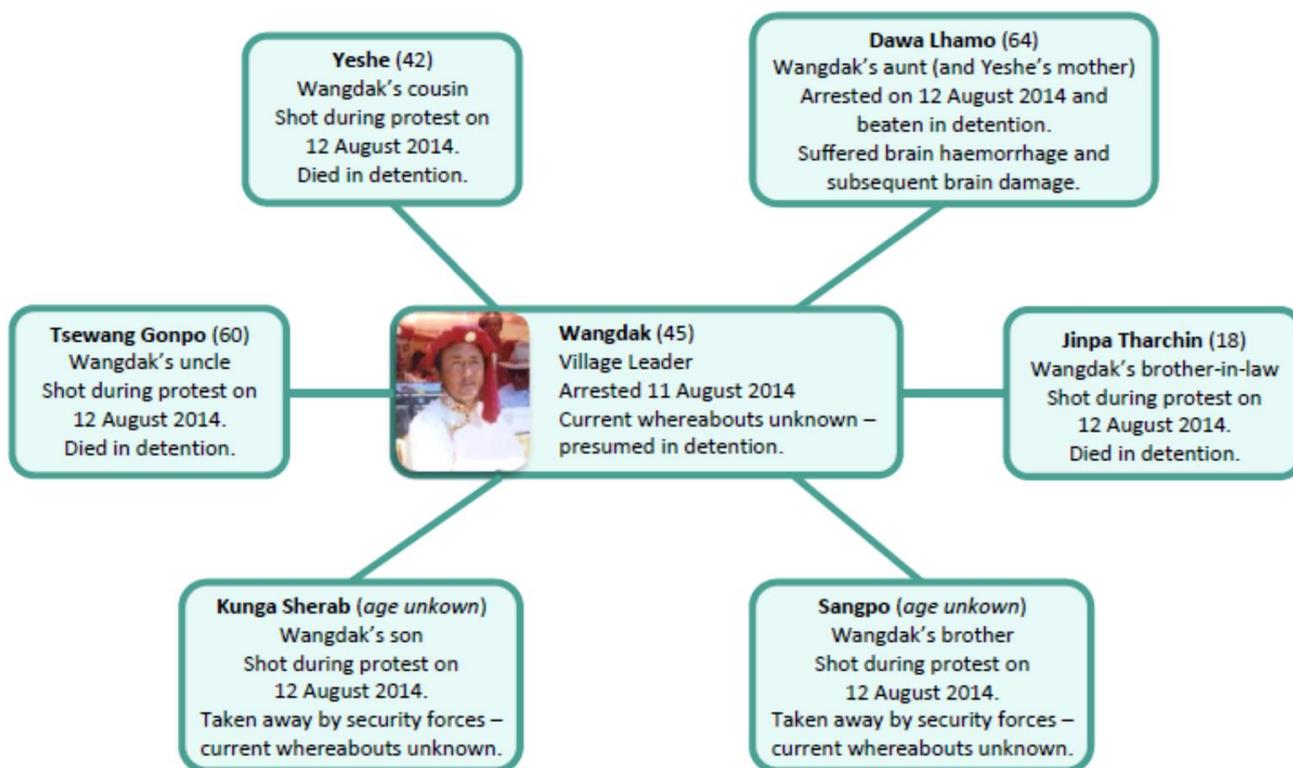
Days later, Tibet Watch received news of the deaths of three of Wangdak’s detained relatives: Tsewang Gonpo, aged 60, Yeshe, aged 42, and Jinpa Tharchin, aged 18. Tsewang Gonpo was Wangdak’s uncle, Yeshe was his cousin and Jinpa Tharchin was his brother-in-law (married to his step-sister, Metok). All three had been denied medical treatment for injuries sustained at the protest of 12 August. The exact date of their deaths is unknown but their bodies were returned to their families on 18 August.

It was also reported in August that Metok, the pregnant wife of deceased Jinpa Tharchin and step-sister of Wangdak, hanged herself on 18 August after receiving the news of her husband’s death. She was seven months pregnant at the time. However, Tibet Watch has recently received alternative reports attesting that Metok is still alive. These reports were accompanied by the news that Metok’s mother, Palmo, had died at the time of the protest. Palmo had been ill for some time and did not participate in the protest. However, the conditions during the crackdown made it impossible for her to receive the care that she needed, especially with so many of her family and neighbours either in detention or in hiding. As a result, her condition deteriorated and she died.

As noted earlier, one of the people detained on 12 August was a 64-year-old woman named Dawa Lhamo, who is Wangdak’s aunt and the mother of his cousin, Yeshe, who died in custody. Following her detention, Dawa Lhamo was interrogated over several days and beaten so badly that she suffered a brain haemorrhage which rendered her immobile and unable to speak. She was transferred to hospital in Dartsedo County (Ch: Kangding) on 23 August but nobody, including her family members, was allowed to accompany her or visit her in the hospital. She was placed under tight security and, at the time of writing, is still suffering brain damage as a result of her injuries.

Whether by coincidence or design, the impact of the crackdown has been disproportionately felt by Wangdak’s family. The details of those who were directly targeted by the security forces are summarised in the diagram below:

¹¹ Anonymous, Tibet Watch interview



Since the events of August 2014, the local authorities have attempted to re-write the narrative and have tried to generate accusations that Wangdak had made improper use of public funds. No formal charges have been made but local villagers have been summoned to official meetings and instructed to tell others that Wangdak's arrest resulted from improper use of public funds, rather than his dispute with the authorities. The first meeting was held on 18 August and was so poorly attended that the authorities were obliged to schedule further meetings. So far their attempts to discredit Wangdak have been unsuccessful.

Wangdak's current condition and whereabouts remain unconfirmed. Local people believe he is being held in a detention centre in neighbouring Derge County. However, the Derge People's Welfare Association, which is based in exile, published a news report on their Tibetan language website on 7 September 2014 saying that Wangdak "was being paraded on the streets of the capital of Sershul County with handcuffs and leg-irons on".¹² Tibet Watch has been unable to independently verify this information.

The security forces deployed to the area have since been withdrawn and most of the detained protesters have been released, except for Wangdak himself and those whom the authorities believe took on the leading roles in the protest. This includes two men named Tashi and Lama Pema.

Despite the withdrawal of troops, local residents are still very hesitant to speak about the incidents, especially to anyone outside of Tibet.



Screenshot from Derge People's Welfare Association's website

¹² For full report see དཔོན་དབང་གཤམ་ལེང་གྲུ་རྫོང་ཐོག་ལ་འདུག་ཟེས། *It is said that village leader Wangdak is in the capital of Sershul county*, Derge People's Welfare Association, 7 September 2014: <http://ow.ly/F1JYh>

China's façade of happiness in Tibet

While the events reported here were unfolding in Tibet, Chinese state media joined the international voices condemning the shooting in Ferguson in the US.¹³ Yet the same Chinese media has remained absolutely silent about what was happening around the same time in Kardze TAP. The shooting in Sershul County and the subsequent deaths were covered by a range of international media outlets, including Reuters, the New York Times and the International Business Times. In contrast, Chinese state media has not reported on a single incident and no official statements have been made with regard to Wangdak or his alleged crimes. According to a New York Times report of 14 August, “A person answering the telephone at one police station in the prefecture declined to comment”¹⁴.

China's silence over the shooting has also contrasted with the efforts the government has been making to construct an image of harmony, prosperity and development in Tibet. On 12 and 13 August 2014 - while peaceful protesters in Kardze TAP were being beaten, shot and arrested - around 100 delegates from 33 countries, including the UK and US, gathered in Tibet's capital, Lhasa, for the “2014 Forum on the Development of Tibet”.¹⁵ The Forum was jointly organised by the State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region.



Forum on the Development of Tibet, China - held in Lhasa, 12-13 August 2014¹⁶

On 14 August, the Forum organisers issued a document called the “Lhasa Consensus”. The first point of this document stated that:

“Participants notice that Tibet enjoys sound economic growth, social harmony, [...], and the people enjoy a happy life.”

The second point went on to state that:

“Participants notice that ordinary people in Tibet are satisfied with their well-off lives [...] All ethnic groups in Tibet have full confidence and motivation for building a better future.”¹⁷

¹³ Ferguson has been rocked by protests since an unarmed, black teenager, Michael Brown, was shot by a white police officer on 9 August 2014. The incident has reignited unrest over a number of issues in the US, including race relations, civil rights and criminal justice. Criticism of both the shooting and how it was handled has been widespread and remains ongoing.

¹⁴ *At Least 10 Injured After Police Fire on Tibetan Protesters*, New York Times, 15 August 2014:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/15/world/asia/chinese-police-fire-on-tibetan-protesters.html>

¹⁵ This was the first international forum of its kind to take place in Tibet. The first Forum on Development in Tibet took place in Vienna, Austria, in November 2007: <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/xw/t385907.htm>

¹⁶ Source: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-08/12/c_133550353_2.htm

¹⁷ See Appendix 2 for full text of the Lhasa Consensus.

Chinese state media claimed that all Forum participants had endorsed the document but this was quickly repudiated by a number of the visiting politicians. New Zealand politician, Bob Parker, told the media that “I certainly haven’t signed up to it” and added that he thought “a number of people who were there were a little surprised to hear about that statement”.¹⁸

The disparity between China’s claims in the Lhasa Consensus and the events in Kardze TAP requires little explanation. Yet, China appears blind to the transparency of their attempts to manufacture a façade of happiness in Tibet. Two months after the violence in Kardze TAP, China invited film crews from Ireland and Sweden to visit the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). This was the first time in many years that China had allowed foreign journalists any access at all to the TAR and before the journalists had even set foot in Tibet the trip was being described as “carefully choreographed”.

In one of his pieces for RTE (Ireland’s national public service broadcaster), journalist Philip Bromwell described the security in the TAR as “tight” and “far from subtle”. He also noted that “the message our Chinese hosts want to convey is rather obvious too”.¹⁹ That message was exactly the same as the one promulgated during the Lhasa Forum – social harmony, progress and development. A lecturer at the College of Tibetan Medicine who had been selected for interview told the film crew “Tibet has received support from the government and has been well-developed and grows very rapidly”. However, a monk who was asked an unscheduled question about the reasons why Tibetans protest seemed decidedly uncomfortable in front of the Chinese guides – blinking rapidly, taking a step backwards, nervously trying to laugh off the question and eventually saying only that it was a very difficult question to answer.²⁰ Bromwell’s concluding comment was that “even inside Tibet, it seems a true picture of what life is really like here remains out of reach”.²¹

An article from a Swiss journalist who very recently gained access to Lhasa similarly claimed that the government in Tibet was deliberately presenting foreign visitors with an “image of paradise” and also urging them to promote this image in their own commentary.²² One official was described in the article as “patronising” and accused of trying to tell journalists what to write about Tibet. He was reported as saying, amongst other things, that they should emphasise “the extraordinary happy quality of life” which Tibetans now enjoy and should also point out that such happiness is “thanks to the Communist Party of China”.²³

However, the Swiss article went on to question why a society which was “harmonious, peaceful, happy and so grateful” ... “must be controlled by police and CCTV in every nook and cranny with checkpoints where helmets, batons and plastic shields are visible for everyone to see”.²⁴

This is a question which propaganda exercises like the Lhasa Forum can neither banish nor answer. China may be keen to plaster over the reality of occupation with its façade of happiness but the events in Kardze TAP show that the Tibetan people are far from happy and are not allowed to air simple grievances in a peaceful manner. By refusing to engage in dialogue with village leader Wangdak, fatally shooting, critically injuring and detaining protesters, the authorities have sent a strong signal that Tibetans have no right to free expression and that any form of dissent will be met with the full force of the repressive state.

¹⁸ *BBC New Zealand politician rejects pro-China Tibet document*, John Sudworth, BBC, 15 August 2014: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-china-blog-28804216>

¹⁹ Philip Bromwell, RTE News, 21 October 2014: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRuj6cuxrw&feature=youtu.be&list=UU8urSFTmQDxaPDEIZ2Fd63Q>

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Paradies unter Polizeikontrolle*, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 16 November 2014: <http://www.nzz.ch/international/asien-und-pazifik/paradies-unter-polizeikontrolle-1.18425338>

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Appendix 1: List of people affected by the crackdown

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	Notes
Wangdak	Male	45	Village Leader	Arrested 11 August, current condition and whereabouts unknown
Jinpa Tharchin	Male	18		Wangdak's brother-in-law, shot during 12 August protest, died in custody, body returned 18 August
Tsewang Gonpo	Male	60		Wangdak's uncle, shot during 12 August protest, died in custody, body returned to family on 18 August
Yeshe	Male	42		Wangdak's cousin, shot during 12 August protest, died in custody, body returned to family on 18 August
Unknown	Male		Policeman	Shot in the neck at 12 August protest, died
Palmo	Female			Mother of Metok, who was married to Jinpa Tharchin who died in custody. Palmo was unwell and died from lack of medical care during the time of the protest and crackdown.
Kunga Sherab	Male			Wangdak's son, shot twice at 12 August protest, hospitalised, current condition/whereabouts unknown
Sangpo	Male			Wangdak's brother, shot twice at 12 August protest, hospitalised, current condition/whereabouts unknown
Dawa Lhamo	Female	64		Wangdak's aunt, detained on 12 August, beaten in custody and suffered brain haemorrhage, hospitalised on 23 August, still suffering brain damage.
Lo Phelsang	Male			Initially reported to have committed suicide in detention on 17 August, now reported as still alive but whereabouts unknown.
Unknown	Male	22		Protester, detained 12 August and initially reported to have died in custody from injuries on 17 August – all details currently unconfirmed
Metok	Female			Wife of Jinpa Tharchin and step-sister of Wangdak, initially reported to have committed suicide following Jinpa Tharchin's death, now reported as still alive.
Lama Pema	Male			Detained on 12 August, believed to be a ring-leader and reportedly still in detention.
Tashi	Male			Detained on 12 August, believed to be a ring-leader and reportedly still in detention.
Wangchen	Male		Deputy head of Shukpa village	Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Karma Rinchen	Male		Shukpa Miru Chanting Master	Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Bhumo	Female			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Bugyal	Male			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Dawa Tashi	Male			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Galuk	Male			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released

Crackdown in Kardze (August 2014) | Tibet Watch 2014

Jamyang Sonam	Male			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Karma Tashi	Male			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Kunga Tenzin	Male			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Lakyab	Male			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Pema Gyalpo	Male			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Taga	Male			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Tashi Gonpo	Male			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Thupten Cheophel	Male			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Tsekyab Wangmo	Female			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Tsering	Male			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Tsogyal	Male			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Yangchen Lhamo	Female			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Yangchen Phamo	Female			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Yeshi Dolma	Female			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released
Yonten Kyab	Male			Detained on 12 August, now reportedly released

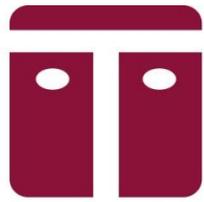
Appendix 2: Lhasa Consensus – full text

LHASA, Aug. 14 (Xinhua)

Following is the full text of the Lhasa Consensus reached at the "2014 Forum on the Development of Tibet, China."

The "2014 Forum on the Development of Tibet, China," jointly organized by the State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China and the People's Government of Tibet Autonomous Region, was held from August 12 to 13. Nearly 100 distinguished participants from more than 30 countries and regions attended the event. It is the first large-scale international conference themed on the development of Tibet held in Tibet Autonomous Region. Centering on the theme of "The Development of Tibet: Opportunities and Alternatives" and the sub-themes of "Sustainable Development," "Inheritance and Protection of Tibetan Culture," and "Ecological and Environmental Protection," delegates to the forum conducted intense and in-depth discussions in a friendly and candid atmosphere. The delegates reached the following consensus:

1. Participants notice that Tibet enjoys sound economic growth, social harmony, deep-rooted Tibetan culture and beautiful natural scenery, and the people enjoy a happy life. It is a place where the modern and the traditional meet and where man lives in harmony with nature. Tibet has embarked on an irreversible path of modern civilization.
2. Participants notice that ordinary people in Tibet are satisfied with their well-off lives, good education, sound medical care, housing and various social securities. All ethnic groups in Tibet have full confidence and motivation for building a better future.
3. Participants notice that Tibet's traditional culture is apparent everywhere. Fine traditional culture and cultural relics have been well preserved. This is a result of the dedication and efforts of the Chinese Central Government and the People's Government of Tibet Autonomous Region in protecting, inheriting, and advocating Tibetan culture, which should be encouraged and supported.
4. Participants notice that different religions co-exist in harmony in Tibet and the Tibetan people enjoy religious freedom. Prayer flags, pilgrims and people burning aromatic plants for religious purpose can be seen easily on the streets of Lhasa. The temples are crowded with worshippers and pilgrims.
5. Participants notice that most parts of Tibet are still in a natural state. While enjoying modern civilization, the Tibetan people are able to enjoy blue skies and white clouds, holy mountains and lakes, forests, grasslands, clean water and fresh air.
6. Participants notice that a path of sustainable development in Tibet featuring coordinated and balanced economic, social, cultural development, ecological and environmental protection will not only be beneficial to the long-term development of Tibet but also offer a significant model for other countries and regions. Participants appreciated the substantial efforts and considerable achievements of the Chinese Central Government and the People's Government of Tibet Autonomous Region in promoting economic and social development, improving people's well-being, preserving the culture and improving the ecology and environment of Tibet.
7. Participants unanimously agree that what they have actually seen in Tibet differs radically from what the 14th Dalai and the Dalai clique have said. The Dalai clique's statements on Tibet are distorted and incorrect. Many Western media reports are biased and have led to much misunderstanding. Seeing is believing. Participants express the aspiration to introduce the real Tibet to the world.
8. Participants notice that the forum, jointly held by the State Council Information Office of China and the People's Government of Tibet Autonomous Region is of great significance for bringing Tibet to the world and helping the world have a better understanding of Tibet. Participants were satisfied with the considerate arrangements for the forum and looked forward to regularly holding the forum in Tibet.



TIBET WATCH
བོད་གནས་ལྟ་ཞིབ་

Crackdown in Kardze (August 2014)
November 2014