

Continued human rights abuses in Tibet

Monday 24 March 2008, by [THOMPSON Jo](#) (Date first published: 5 March 1997).

Throughout 1996, the Chinese government continued to commit widespread human rights abuses in Tibet. These included instances of death in detention, torture, arbitrary arrests, detention without public trial, long detention of nationalists for peacefully expressing their religious and political views and intensified control of speech, religion and the press.

Of particular note were crackdowns surrounding religious practices, including those which have no overt political content.

In February, the Chinese government ordered the closing of all politically active monasteries and during the year increased the imprisonment and abuse and torture of monks and nuns accused of political activism. In April, photographs of the Dalai Lama in monasteries and homes were banned.

The ban prompted protests in the monasteries, and in May and June more than 90 monks were detained at Lhasa's Ganden monastery. It is reported that three monks were shot and one subsequently died of a bullet wound.

The Chinese government also began a campaign to [register](#) ' ' and re-educate' ' dissident monks. Monks were coerced into signing statements criticising the Dalai Lama.

Discrimination against Tibetans remains widespread, especially in employment and education. The continued influx of Han Chinese into Tibet is impacting negatively on traditional culture and diluting Tibetan demographic dominance.

Threats by China against world governments which meet with the Dalai Lama are becoming increasingly common.

To show support for the Tibetan people, the first Australian national rally for Tibet will be held in Canberra on March 9.

The rally, organised by the Australia Tibet Council, is part of an international day of non-violent action. Tens of thousands of Tibetans and their supporters will gather in cities around the world at this time to call for peace in Tibet.

March 10 is the anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan uprising in Lhasa, when tens of thousands of Tibetans took to the streets, demanding an end to China's occupation of their country. At least 87,000 Tibetans were killed in the massacre that followed. Thousands more, including the Dalai Lama, fled into exile. This day is now commemorated around the world as Tibet's national day and is a focus for solidarity with this beleaguered nation.

A 38-hour vigil is also being planned outside the Chinese embassy in Canberra to coincide with the national rally. This will mark the 38th year since the Tibetan uprising.

In conjunction with the worldwide rallies, Tibet Support Groups around the world are asking local councils to fly the Tibetan flag on March 10. Last year the campaign was very successful, especially in Europe, where more than 600 mayors in more than 20 countries raised the Tibetan flag. Already

more than 14 councils in Australia have agreed to fly the flag, and more are expected to follow suit.

The Canberra rally will be held on Sunday, March 9, outside the Chinese embassy, 11am-1.30 pm. The 38-hour vigil, also outside the embassy, begins 8pm, Saturday, March 8. For further details, contact Charlotte Davies, (06) 247 8938.

P.S.

* From: International News, Green Left Weekley issue #265 - 5 March 1997.

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