



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on April 20, 2011

## Communist China Cracks Down on Tibetan Monks

The communist Chinese regime is cracking down on Tibetan monks at a major Buddhist monastery as well as the surrounding community, murdering and arresting protesters while prompting worldwide condemnation and warnings of more atrocities to come.



The most recent flare-up at the Kirti monastery began on March 16 after a monk [set himself on fire](#) to protest the communist dictatorship and its efforts to eradicate Tibetan culture. It was his way of commemorating the third anniversary of mass peaceful protests across Tibet in 2008 that resulted in a brutal crackdown by the Chinese government.

Instead of putting out the flames, Chinese police savagely beat the young monk, [contributing](#) to his death and causing resentment among fellow monks. The communist regime responded by [blockading](#) the Kirti compound and its 2,500 monks, [ordering](#) many of them to submit to "patriotic re-education."

Because the monastery is located in the illegally annexed Ngaba region of Tibet, considered by the communist Chinese regime to be part of China's Sichuan province, the local population is [very supportive](#) of the Buddhist monks. The people tried to defend the monastery, so they are being [targeted](#) as well.

Police reportedly unleashed trained attack dogs on residents of the community who stood up for the monks, brutally beating anyone who opposed them. Reports also indicate that Chinese authorities surrounded the monastery with barbed wire and placed it under siege to prevent the entry of essential goods including food.

"More than 2,500 monks at Kirti monastery are detained inside the premises, with their movements blocked ... They are facing shortages of food," Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy deputy director Jampel Monlam [told](#) Radio Free Asia from India. "We are extremely concerned for the fate of the monks."

On top of the brutality, monks between 18 and 40 years of age are being [forced to endure](#) what the communist regime calls "patriotic re-education." Several hundred at least have already been abducted and imprisoned for the brainwashing operation, according to [news accounts](#).

*The Tibet Post* also [reported](#) that about 100 monks at the Kirti monastery have disappeared since mid-March, when the most recent conflict erupted. There is no publicly known information on their whereabouts so far.

"As a former political prisoner, I have personally experienced the kind of torture inflicted on Tibetans in Chinese prison," said Lukar Jam, the vice-president of a Tibetan organization of former political prisoners. "The Kirti monks are innocent and are under attack for simply expressing their



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internationally recognized right to freedom of religion." He called for the immediate release of all arbitrarily detained prisoners.

Communist "security" forces were [reportedly](#) conducting house-to-house inspections in the surrounding community in an effort to round up dissidents — especially those directly aiding the monks. Dozens of heavy military vehicles and swarms of police have occupied the region since unrest began. And at least two elderly women were killed on April 12 in clashes with communist armed forces, according to [reports](#).

The exiled leader of Tibet, known as the Dalai Lama, made a rare [public statement](#) over the weekend urging the international community, governments around the world, and human-rights groups to put pressure on the Chinese regime. He also appealed to the communist leadership to stop using force and address the genuine grievances of the Tibetan people.

"For the past six decades, using force as the principle [sic] means in dealing with the problems in Tibet has only deepened the grievances and resentment of the Tibetan people," the Dalai Lama [said](#) on his official website. Calling the situation "extremely grim," he also asked his followers to exercise restraint to avoid further atrocities.

"I urge both the monks and the lay Tibetans of the area not to do anything that might be used as a pretext by the local authorities to massively crack down on them," the Buddhist spiritual leader [noted](#) in the statement. "I am very concerned that this situation, if allowed to go on, may become explosive with catastrophic consequences."

The U.S. State Department spoke out about the crackdown too. Spokesman Mark Toner [said](#) last week that the Chinese government's armed intervention at the monastery was "inconsistent with internationally recognized principles of religious freedom and human rights."

Exiled Tibetan groups have also been very vocal about China's latest round of suppression. The Tibetan Youth Congress, for example, is [engaged](#) in a hunger strike while appealing to the world for help.

International human-rights organizations have also pleaded for an end to the communist campaign.

"The Chinese government has an obligation to protect its citizens' rights of public expression, assembly, and religious belief," [said](#) Asia advocacy director at Human Rights Watch Sophie Richardson in a press release. "The use of violence against peaceful, unarmed demonstrators including those surrounding the Kirti monastery would be both unjustifiable and completely unlawful."

The group also said its concern was "heightened" because the Chinese regime has recently arrested and "disappeared" dozens of the nation's most prominent lawyers and human-rights activists. Numerous incidents of "brutality and ill-treatment during arrests" have been documented by the organization since 2008.

Representatives of the communist dictatorship, however, insisted that everything was fine. "According to our knowledge, the monks in the Kirti monastery enjoy a normal life and normal Buddhist activities, and the local social order is also normal," [claimed](#) foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei at a press conference. He said communist "security" forces were in the area just to "prevent unidentified people from entering" the monastery.

Lei also took the opportunity to blast the American State Department's comments. "We ask the U.S. side to respect facts and stop making irresponsible remarks," he said.

Of course, news accounts of the situation rely largely on sources on the ground, since the communist



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occupation severely restricts access to the region. Chinese officials responsible for the area refused to comment or denied the atrocities when [reached](#) by Radio Free Asia.

A monk at the monastery [contacted](#) by AFP over the telephone said it was “inconvenient” to talk, suggesting he was being monitored. But he encouraged journalists to visit the area to see “the truth.” The communist regime, however, strictly prohibits it.

Tibet was a sovereign, independent nation before communist Chinese forces [invaded](#) it in 1949 and 1950. The tiny country was eventually forced to sign an agreement with the dictatorship to prevent further atrocities.

After a failed uprising against the communist regime, the Dalai Lama was forced to flee to India in 1959. Since then, the Chinese government has [continued](#) to rule Tibet with an iron fist.

In March of 2008, for example, a mass uprising of Tibetans throughout the region resulted in yet another brutal crackdown. Even the communist regime acknowledges that its armed forces shot and killed protesters. Countless more were arrested, brainwashed, and brutally tortured.

China’s communist dictatorship is [known worldwide](#) for its brutality and gross violations of human rights. It regularly forces women to undergo abortions in its zeal to enforce the so-called “[one-child policy](#),” for example. Religious groups and political opponents are also persecuted, tortured, and often murdered.

The U.S. government passed a law in 1991 [stating](#) that Tibet, including areas incorporated into the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, and Qinghai, is “an occupied country under the established principal [sic] of international law.” It also stated that the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile were the true representatives of Tibet.

But, in its eagerness to please its largest foreign creditor, the U.S. government continues to officially acknowledge the communist dictatorship’s supposed authority to rule over Tibet. And despite some tepid criticism here and there, China still enjoys “Most Favored Nation” trading status with America — even as it [steps up](#) its [massive espionage campaign](#).

*Photo: The great stupa at Kirti Monastery, Ngawa, (Chinese occupied) Tibet*



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