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TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

## Monthly Translation and Analyses Digest

A compilation of selected stories, translation and analyses of Chinese government media reports that are otherwise available only in Chinese and Tibetan language.



Front page image: The annual session of National People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region held in January 2020

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### **New regulation on ‘ethnic unity’ raises concerns of accelerated assimilation**

A new regulation to promote “national unity” raises concerns that Chinese authorities will accelerate its assimilationist policy to undermine Tibetan political and cultural identity.

The “Regulations on the Establishment of a Model Area for National Unity and Progress of TAR”, adopted at the annual session of the TAR People’s Congress on 11 January, will take effect from 1 May this year, reported the *China News Network* on 13 January.

As shown by an analysis of the regulation in the official *Tibet Daily*, the regulation is aimed at promoting the “unity of the Chinese motherland” at the expense of undermining the status and interests of other non-Chinese nationalities such as Tibetans and Uyghurs. According to the article, the regulation demonstrated in clear terms that “Tibet has always been an integral part of the motherland since ancient times and all nationalities are part of the big family of Chinese nation”.

Apart from co-opting Tibetan history for the purpose of the new regulation and its assimilationist agenda, the regulation is designed to give precedence to the Party-state’s exclusionary understanding of “ethnic unity” and suppress ethnic diversity in the name of “ethnic separatism”.

The importance extended to ‘ethnic unity’ in the regulation further provides a legal cover to the coercive political re-education aka patriotic education campaign, the implementation of which has intensified in recent years on a massive scale. The *Tibet Daily* article further noted that the so-called “patriotic tradition of nationalities” to “defend the Chinese nation and ethnic unity” had succeeded in neutralising the 14th Dalai Lama’s attempts “to falsify history by claiming that ‘Tibet had historically been an independent nation’.”

Another report quoted Yin Haiyan, deputy director and associate researcher of the Institute of Ethnic Studies of the TAR Academy of Social Sciences as saying that the regulation would implement “General Secretary Xi Jinping’s important exposition on ethnic work and governing borders and stabilising Tibet, and the use of laws to

protect and consolidate the great achievements of national unity.”

Xie Hui, deputy director of the Research Center of the Party School of the TAR Party Committee called on “the cadres and people of all ethnic groups in [TAR] to be a participant and practitioner of ethnic unity to jointly shoulder the sacred mission of safeguarding ethnic unity, maintaining social stability, and maintaining the unity of the motherland.”

## **Grassroots surveillance program extended for ninth year in a row**

Chinese authorities have announced the stationing of more than 20,000 cadres in 5,464 villages as part of the controversial ‘Solidify the Foundation, Benefit the Masses’ (Ch: *qianji huimin*) campaign in TAR.

A ceremony was held in Lhasa on 15 January to introduce the new batch and commend the work of the previous batch of “village-based cadre teams” (Ch: *zhucun gongzuodui*) in “establishing a solid foundation for stable development at the grassroots level”, reported Xinhua on 16 January.

Running for the ninth year in a row, the program has been used to monitor and surveil local Tibetans, organise anti-Dalai Lama themed political indoctrination campaigns, and entrench and expand the influence of the Party-state in Tibet.

Since October 2011 when the program was started, more than 170000 cadres from Party

and government organs, state-owned enterprises, and institutions directly under the central government have been stationed at the grassroots level in TAR. The report said the village-based cadres had “fought hard on the front line, becoming a “connecting bridge” between the Party and the masses”.

## **TAR’s 2020 plan prioritises ‘stability maintenance’ and ‘fight against Dalai Clique’**

Chinese authorities in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) have again included ‘stability maintenance’ campaign and the ‘fight against Dalai Clique’ as priority areas in its work program for 2020.

As part of its “social supervision strategy” to create an “orderly and harmonious society”, the TAR authorities will focus on three crucial issues: social stability, national unity, and management of religious affairs, reported the *Tibet Daily* on 10 January.

Signalling an escalation of repressive measures in Tibet, the report said all-round preservation of social stability required the “deepening of the fight against Dalai Clique’s separatist infiltration and destruction activities” and “building a people’s fortress to defend national security”, continue implementing the “campaign to crush black and evil forces”, and “strike hard against illegal activities”.

The TAR authorities further stressed the importance of vigorously “publicising and

implementing the “Regulations on the Establishment of a Model Area for Ethnic Unity and Progress in the TAR”, which was adopted at the annual third session of the 11th TAR People’s Congress on 11 January. The report said that the ‘regulations’ were passed to “strengthen and promote the socialist ethnic relations, firmly establish the consciousness of Chinese national identity, to join different ethnicities into one entity like a pomegranate.”

However, the implementation of the so-called ethnic unity policies in Tibet has resulted in the undermining and marginalisation of Tibetan cultural and political identity as was seen in the imprisonment of Tibetan language rights activist Tashi Wangchuk as well as the prominent former Tibetan political prisoner Tsegon Gyal, who was sentenced to three years prison term because he criticised China’s ‘ethnic unity’ policy on his personal WeChat account. Under the presidency of Xi Jinping, China’s ‘ethnic unity’ policy has descended into aggressive assimilationist tactics.

2020 will see no change in China’s management of religious affairs in TAR as the authorities have vowed to “comprehensively implement Party’s policy on religious work” in order to “strengthen the management of mobile monks and nuns”, “continuously improve the ability and level of managing religious affairs in accordance with the law” and “better promote the adaptation of religion to a socialist society.” The ‘Four Standards’ propaganda campaign that is aimed at cultivating politically reliable monks and nuns will be strictly implemented in all the religious institutions in TAR.

## **TAR branch of United Front holds conference on ethnic and religious affairs in Lhasa**

The United Front Work Department of TAR held a conference on 16 January on ethnic and religious affairs amid its increasing profile and importance in the work of maintaining stability and sinicizing religious and ethnic minorities under president Xi Jinping's leadership.

In his address at the meeting, Ding Ye, deputy Party secretary of the TAR Party committee and secretary of the TAR CPPCC's Party committee pointed out that under the leadership of the TAR Party committee in the past year, the United Front's ethnic and religious affairs departments at all levels had thoroughly implemented the important thought of General Secretary Jinping on "strengthening and improving the United Front work of governing borders, stabilising Tibet, strengthening political guidance in religious work, unifying ideological consciousness, and maintaining social stability."

He further emphasized that the cadres and officials of United Front's ethnic and religious affairs departments at all levels should use Xi Jinping's political ideology of "Socialism with Chinese characteristics for the new era" as a "guide to further

improve their political positions, strengthen the 'four consciousness' and the 'four self-confidences' to achieve the stability and prosperity".

Tenkho, standing committee member of the TAR Party Committee and minister of TAR United Front presided over the meeting and delivered a work report. The TAR vice chairman Meng Xiaolin made a concluding speech.

## **Research center to promote Xi Jinping's ideology on ethnic and religious affairs established in Gansu**

Chinese authorities held a meeting on 18 January to mark the establishment of the Gansu Provincial Ethnic and Religious Research Center, also known as Gansu Tibetan Studies Center, in Lanzhou, capital of Gansu Province, reported the *Chinese Tibet Network* on 20 January citing *Gansu Daily*.

Ma Tingli, standing committee member of the provincial Party committee and minister of the provincial United Front Work Department, pointed out that the establishment of the research center was a decision made by the Provincial Party Committee to implement the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important speeches and instructions to Gansu on building the research center into "a propaganda team that understands the Party's ethnic and religious theories, policies

and strategies on governing Tibet; a think tank that serves the Party committee and government 's decision-making on ethnic and religious issues; and integrate scholarly expertise on the ethnic and religious Tibetan areas inside and outside the province". Ma called the Party-directed research centre "a large platform for wisdom and a new base in Gansu for the study of ethnic and religious affairs of the Central United Front Theory Research Society."

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