

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

ICT Analysis
March 10, 2014

<http://www.savetibet.org/newsroom/has-life-here-always-been-like-this/>

“Has life here
always been
like this?”



*Chinese microbloggers reveal
systematic militarization in Tibet*



Photo posted by Chinese tourist on Weibo social media site, taken in the town square, Chamdo, Tibet Autonomous Region, in early spring, 2013.



Summary and Observations

Social media messages posted by Chinese tourists visiting Tibetan regions have provided a revealing window into Chinese policies in Tibet. The messages recovered by ICT provide further evidence of the large-scale security personnel deployments that have increasingly become part of the Tibetan landscape since the [widespread Tibetan protests of 2008](#), followed by what now numbers [more than 125 self-immolations](#). These observations counter the [portrayal by Chinese officials and state media](#) of a tranquil and grateful Tibetan population.

The messages highlight the disparate security conditions under which Tibetan and Chinese people live in the People's Republic of China, with Tibetans treated with greater suspicion and [targeted for even low-level information sharing](#).

Under China's system for [stability maintenance](#), or *weiwen*, authorities have implemented an extensive security apparatus and show overwhelming force in order to "[maintain harmony and stability in Tibet](#)." At the same time, the Chinese government has sought to suppress the dissemination of accurate news from Tibet⁽¹⁾ through censorship and restrictions on foreign tourists.

Chinese authorities go to great lengths to censor the information available in the PRC. They have implemented [measures that stretch across all forms of media](#), including responding to the ever-shifting landscape of the Internet with what is often called the [Great Firewall](#). Even the fast-pace and diffuse dynamic of online social media have not allowed it to evade the grasp of authorities, who are becoming increasingly more adept at imposing [measures that curb social media activity](#). This crackdown has resulted in a decrease of Weibo users and a shift to other platforms, such as WeChat.

Despite authorities' efforts to censor to crack down on social media, ICT was able to collect hundreds of [images and messages](#) from the popular Chinese microblogging site, [Sina Weibo](#), using the crowd-sourced perspective of Chinese tourists to further document the harsh security measures implemented in Tibet by Chinese authorities. ICT's analysis of these messages finds that:

1. Chinese tourists have evidenced through social media the reality of the militarization and repressive measures that the government is implementing in Tibet and seeking to cover up through propaganda

- These Weibo observations are possible because Chinese travelers get access to Tibetan areas that are denied to foreign diplomats and journalists

2. Use of social media demonstrates a double standard in Tibet: Chinese travelers posting Weibo messages on Tibet appear to be afforded greater leeway by the government, while Tibetans who pass on information about Tibet are considered suspect by the state

3. Chinese tourists find a reality in Tibet that differs sharply from expectations formed through official propaganda about Tibet

- Chinese tourists express confusion and at times fear over checkpoints and ID searches in Tibet
- Chinese tourists find their cell phone and internet service are turned off in Tibetan areas, revealing government efforts to block Tibetans' communication



People's Armed Police carrying fire-extinguishers in Lhasa



Finding 1: Exposing the Reality

Chinese tourists have evidenced through social media the reality of the militarization and repressive measures that the government is implementing in Tibet and seeking to cover up through propaganda.

拉萨大昭寺广场，伏在屋顶的狙击手用的什么设备？

收起 | 查看大图 | 向左转 | 向右转



2009-12-1 02:41 来自新浪微博 | 举报

转发(1) | 收藏 | 评论(5)

Paramilitary member on rooftop in Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, 2009.

The images and messages posted by Chinese tourists reveal tensions in Tibet that diverge from the Chinese government's narrative of a "united, democratic, wealthy, civilized and harmonious new Tibet." The perspectives of these Chinese travelers has more in common with the reporting by human rights groups, journalists, international bodies, and foreign governments of conditions in Tibet, where Tibetans are subject to constant surveillance and a state of de facto martial law. As one visitor to Lhasa noted,

只有在拉萨才能感觉到如此的紧张气氛，随处都可以看到站岗执勤的武警、协警、辅警、民兵、便衣，无论是布达拉宫还是大昭寺还是火车站，怎么感觉跟战乱年代似的。（楼顶红旗处有一名武警荷枪实弹）

2012-7-31 14:35 来自iPhone客户端 | 举报

转发 | 收藏 | 评论(3)

Only in Lhasa can you experience such a tense atmosphere, everywhere you can see People's Armed Police standing guard, the Police Association, Auxiliary Police, the People's Militia, plainclothes police, whether you're at the Potala Palace, the Jokhang, or the train station, how it feels like living through an era of war! (There's an armed policeman on the roof next to the red flag). (2012).

The pervasive security apparatus is acutely implemented in high density areas where large numbers of Tibetans gather. These often coincide with highly trafficked Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage sites, especially in Lhasa.

晚上的大昭寺门口广场，武警警察比其他人多。有必要吗？

西藏自治区·拉萨市·城关区·八廓南街 - 显示地图

2012-11-7 19:50 来自小米手机 | 举报

👍 | 转发 | 收藏 | 评论(2)

At night in the square in front of the Jokhang, there are more People's Armed Police and regular police than other people combined. Is that really necessary? (2012)

The forces deployed to patrol Tibet are primarily made up of the paramilitary People's Armed Police (PAP), who are charged with domestic security responsibilities, and are at times joined by the PAP's highly trained Special Police units. However, speculation persists over People's Liberation Army deployments to Tibetan areas, with a correspondent from *The Economist* observing last October that the identifying markings on several military-style trucks in Lhasa were inexplicably covered.^[2] This follows images and analysis of PLA deployments in Lhasa during the 2008 protests.^[3]

道孚，广场中心一些人在跳锅庄，远远走来一群特警，手里拎着冲锋枪和防暴盾，在广场边列成两排，默默地看，看了十分钟了。。我一个人坐在他们看锅庄的视线正中吃花生，淡定。。总感觉后面会突然冲上来大屠杀的样子。。。

2011-4-30 21:03 来自Follow5 | 举报

👍 | 转发 | 收藏 | 评论

Tawu, in the square some people are doing a Tibetan dance, a bunch of Special Police came up to them, assault rifles and riot shields in hand, forming two rows in the square, silently watching them for about ten minutes... It looked like it could become a massacre. (2011)

The confrontational approach reflected by these forces is replicated in street patrols in Tibetan cities, checkpoints along main roads, and at Tibetan gatherings, regardless whether they are political protests, or take place in celebration of a long-held day of cultural significance. This approach has also lead to first-hand comparisons of Tibetan areas to war zones:

昨日，沿着鲜水河断裂由炉霍至成都，道孚县城犹如战区，武警公安沿街而立，每个口子都荷枪实弹特警！我们被告之不得留宿县城，不得在街上滞留！

2011-8-17 14:10 来自新浪微博手机版 | 举报

👍 | 转发(2) | 收藏 | 评论(4)

Yesterday I drove along the Xianshui River fault line from Luhuo [Dranggo] to Chengdu, Tawu county was like a war zone, People's Armed Police and Public Security standing along the street, heavily-armed Special Police at each door! We were told you can't stay overnight in the county town, and you can't stay on these streets! (2011)



Finding 1a: All About Access

These Weibo observations are possible because Chinese travelers get access to Tibetan areas that are denied to foreign diplomats and journalists.

原本以为平静的县城 在开过几辆装甲车和大批全副武装的武警后 哥兴奋了~偷拍了一张

收起 | 查看大图 | 向左转 | 向右转



2012-2-8 15:51 来自Android客户端 | 举报

转发 | 收藏 | 评论(2)

Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu province, 2012.

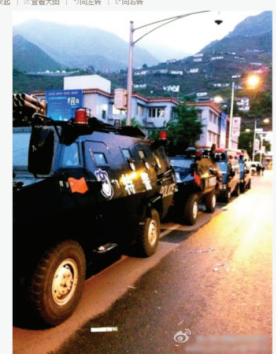
Among the hundreds of images and postings collected from Weibo, many reflect the ability of Chinese tourists to exercise a relative degree of freedom among the intense security presence in Tibet, making them uniquely positioned to witness what is taking place.

In general, foreigners have difficulty gaining access to Tibet. Those whose job it is to observe and report – foreign government officials, human rights monitors and international journalists — are rarely granted access. Authorities closely control foreign travel to Tibet, create ad hoc checkpoints along main roads and require a special permit to get into the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) — a prerequisite not in place in any other part of the PRC, and not required of domestic tourists.

Even though officials claim that Tibet is open, access to the region for foreign reporters is so highly restricted that there are now more foreign journalists working in North Korea, than in Tibet, according to one report. Today, journalists are increasingly forced to rely upon ingenuity and deception in order to gain entry. Reporters who have encountered obstacles in trying to enter or file reports from inside Tibetan areas in recent years include the BBC's Damian Grammaticas and Michael Bristow the

西藏自驾游#昌都位于藏中，西藏第二大城市，拥有亚洲第一大世界第二的主龙峡，是澜沧江的发源地。上午阳光灿烂，使得昌都的山山水水显得更加壮丽。米西完中午饭，下午准备去拥有六百多年历史的格鲁教派寺院噶玛巴林寺。因为西藏解放60周年的原因，西藏各縣加强了治安巡逻，圖為昌都城區看到的跟甲路軍事。

收起 | 查看大图 | 向左转 | 向右转



2011-7-7 13:20 来自iPhone客户端 | 举报

转发(3) | 收藏 | 评论(0)

Chamdo prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region, 2011.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation's [Stephen McDonnell](#), McClatchy reporter [Tom Lasseter](#), and the Guardian's Jonathan Watts. On a trip sponsored by the State Council in 2013, German journalists Kai Strittmatter (Sueddeutsche Zeitung), Gerd Anhalt (ZDF) and Angela Köckritz (DIE ZEIT) had been closely monitored during a "scripted trip" to the TAR.^[4]

As the case of France24's Cyril Payen shows, those successful at circumventing officials and gaining access to Tibet run the risk of subsequent threats and harassment from authorities even after they leave China. Payen [secretly filmed and interviewed residents of Lhasa](#) in May 2013, describing an "Orwellian world of surveillance, like a city under occupation." Chinese authorities [retaliated](#) by dispatching diplomatic personnel to France24's offices in Paris and threatening Payen himself through phone calls and text messages.

Domestic journalists in China are not free to report independently on the situation in Tibet under [stringent government measures limiting freedom of the press](#). In a [2013 report](#) the Committee to Protect Journalists found that more than half of the journalists imprisoned in the People's Republic of China were Tibetan or Uyghur, despite the fact that Tibetans and Uyghurs together make up [less than 1.5 percent](#) of the population.



Finding 2: Double Standards

Use of social media demonstrates a double standard in Tibet: Chinese travelers posting Weibo messages on Tibet appear to be afforded greater leeway by the government, while Tibetans who pass on information about Tibet are considered suspect by the state.

正月十五逛塔尔寺之：特警安保

收起 | 查看大图 | 向左转 | 向右转



2011-2-17 22:56 来自新浪微博 | 举报

转发 | 收藏 | 评论(1)

Kumbum monastery, south-west of Xining, Qinghai province, 2011.

Chinese tourists to Tibet appear to enjoy significantly greater mobility in Tibetan areas and relatively greater freedom online (at least with regards to information on Tibet) than do Tibetans living in their homeland.

The fact that ICT was able to retrieve Weibo messages from Chinese travelers that show militarization of Tibet demonstrates this double-standard. Their mere existence means the messages were not deleted by security personnel at the time they were taken, and were not removed by the Chinese censorship regime. By contrast, Tibetans often find themselves the direct and deliberate target of government censorship. Further, Tibetans who share information about what takes place in Tibet are viewed as organizing dissent. As [observed by Reporters Without Borders](#), their “[l]ocal community networks are particularly targeted in order to nip in the bud any attempt at mobilizing support online,” and which could potentially lead to a ‘mass incident.’

The risks borne by Tibetans for sharing information can have the life-altering consequences of arrest and imprisonment. Tibetans who seek to communicate what takes place in their homeland must contend with “one of the most pervasive and sophisticated regimes of Internet filtering and information control in the world.”^[5] This system of control can be carried out by rather un-sophisticated means as well, such as [destroying satellite equipment capable of receiving foreign radio broadcasts](#), namely those of Voice of America and Radio Free Asia.

The close surveillance and control allows authorities to [target and imprison](#) Tibetans who manage to share news and images with the outside world. For example, prior to March 10, 2012 (during the sensitive period surrounding the [March 10 anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan Uprising](#)), special teams [searched through the personal phones of monks at monasteries in the Lhasa area](#) for evidence of having sent information abroad. These acts are criminalized by claims that they endanger national security or incite ‘separatism.’

The surveillance net cast by officials extends well beyond Tibet’s religious communities, which are already subjected to work teams deployed to instill “[patriotic education](#).” In one telling example, a Tibetan woman named [Norzin Wangmo](#) was sentenced to five years in prison on November 3, 2008, for sending emails and making phone calls abroad about the situation in Tibet.

Since the emergence of [self-immolation as a form of protest](#) in Tibet, authorities have expanded the consequences of information sharing. In addition to accusations related to ‘separatism’ or national security, those caught sharing information related to the self-immolations protests can be subject to charges of “[intentional homicide](#).” In the case of Lobsang Kunchok, a monk from Kirti monastery, and his nephew, Lobsang Tsering, these expanded measures resulted in a [suspended death sentence](#)^[6] and a ten-year prison sentence, respectively, for allegedly sharing information on self-immolation protests with Tibetans living in exile in India.

A Tibetan monk named [Yonten Gyatso was sentenced to seven years imprisonment](#) on June 18, 2012, after he was accused of sharing information with people outside Tibet regarding the self-immolation protest of Tibetan nun [Tenzin Wangmo](#).

This type of heightened surveillance experienced by Tibetans extends beyond the localized space of personal communications and reaches into the more diffuse realm of social media. Researchers at Carnegie Mellon University have found the rate in which authorities delete messages on social media sites, such as Sina Weibo, from Tibetan areas like the Tibet Autonomous Region and Qinghai province to be [far higher than the national average](#), reflecting the acute sensitivity of the Tibet issue.

It is important to note that the postings collected by ICT are from users who identified their home areas as being located outside of Tibet. While there were a small number of postings found from users who identified Tibet as their home area, they have been excluded from this analysis given the clear pattern of reprisals authorities have displayed against Tibetans who share information about the situation in Tibet. While some postings from Chinese tourists did reference instances in which security personnel reacted harshly and demanded that potentially sensitive photos be deleted, ICT’s monitoring has not uncovered any evidence of subsequent detention or punishment of such tourists.





Finding 3: Tibet Behind the Curtain

Chinese travelers find a reality in Tibet that differs sharply from expectations formed through official propaganda about Tibet.

RT RT 【看图说话】趴在拉萨老城屋顶上、将枪口瞄准在大昭寺方向的狙击手们

收起 | 查看大图 | 向左转 | 向右转



2011-11-10 22:52 来自未通过审核应用 | 举报

转发 | 收藏 | 评论

Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, 2011.

The Communist Party advertises Tibet as a land where the government's beneficence triumphs in bringing modernity and happiness to the Tibetan plateau. To maintain this narrative, officials attempt to cover up Tibetan discontent through state propaganda, presenting a glossed-over account that belies the complex security conditions one inevitably encounters when visiting Tibet.

As part of their efforts to minimize negative publicity, as in elsewhere in the PRC, officials stand on constant guard against the occurrence of 'mass incidents' (unapproved gatherings viewed as disrupting stability), largely out of fear over how poorly they reflect on those responsible for ensuring the Party's vision of social order. This anxiety grew following the 2008 Tibetan protests, in which more than 130 overwhelmingly peaceful demonstrations took place across Tibet. In response, officials implemented a violent crackdown and propaganda campaign. This has continued in the wake of some 125 self-immolations.

哲蚌寺维持次序的武警和看晒大佛人流

收起 | 查看大图 | 向左转 | 向右转



2012-9-21 08:59 来自360安全浏览器 | 举报

转发 | 收藏 | 评论

Drepung monastery, Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, 2012.

Official Chinese media outlets continue to portray Tibetans as “happy and healthy,” due to government fashioned economic, cultural, and environmental development programs, for which they should be “grateful” to the Communist Party.

To this end, officials readily welcome the semblance of normalcy, and revenue, that tourists provide. However, while it is difficult to fully assess how this seemingly disjointed propaganda effort has been internalized among Chinese citizens, it is significant to note the sense of surprise or confusion, and at times fear, expressed in many of these Weibo messages with regard to the security conditions that exist in Tibet.

上午参观了大昭寺，赶上了当地的雪顿节，遇见了虔诚无比的信徒，广场里面全面武装：武警，特警，狙击手，警察，部队一应俱全，有战备的感觉。导游告知，穿戴不可暴露，参观时睁大眼睛，关上嘴巴！这里的生活原来是这样的？！

西藏自治区拉萨市城关区朵森格路 · 显示地图

2012-8-17 11:09 来自 iPhone客户端 | 举报

转发(1) | 收藏 | 评论(3)

I visited the Jokhang this morning, just in time for the local Shoton festival, and met with some extremely devout believers. Inside the square there were a lot of weapons: People's Armed Police, Special Police, snipers, police, troops standing at the ready, it felt like a war was about to start. Tour guides say, you can't wear revealing clothing, keep your eyes open when you visit, but keep your mouth shut! Has life here always been like this?! (2012)

终于到了可以上网的地方了，夏河附近的网络是被屏蔽了的，武警防守严密。这个不予置评，我说的多少会有所偏颇。只是觉得国家政策对这些地区的少数民族已经够好了，只要他们不闹事而已。但是，如果不闹事，不争取，不迫使国家机器做出一些妥协，谁又能确定他们今天得到的东西，明天会不会被剥夺呢？！

2013-3-6 09:06 来自 小米手机 | 举报

转发 | 收藏 | 评论

Finally reached a place where I can access the internet, the internet is blocked in the area around Sangchu, People's Armed Police are mounting a tight defense. I have no comment on this, whatever I say might be biased. It's just that I think the national policy towards these minority areas is good enough, just trying to make sure they don't make any trouble. But if you don't make any trouble, don't fight, don't force the state apparatus to make some compromises, who can be sure that the things they have today won't be taken away tomorrow?! (2013)

理塘的路上武警巡逻，仙鹤广场聚集了很多警察……都配着大枪…防爆车警车满街都是，到处是穿着藏袍的人，警车不停的在马路上巡逻…气氛太压抑了…白色恐怖到处弥漫…难道有事要发生了……真心害怕了

2013-3-10 15:56 来自 360浏览器极速版 | 举报

转发 | 收藏 | 评论(12)

There are People's Armed Police patrolling the streets of Lithang county, there were a lot of police gathered in Xianhe Square... They were holding big guns... The streets are full of explosives-proof vehicles and police cars, there are people wearing Tibetan clothes everywhere, and there are non-stop police car patrols on the streets... Repression is in the air... There's a pervasive feeling like the White Terror... Could something happen? I'm really terrified. (2013)

Messages such as these would appear to indicate that the Party's propaganda efforts on Tibet are successful, at least to the extent that Chinese travelers discover a Tibet that differs from the impression they had acquired through portrayals in state-run media.



Finding 3a: Please Pull Over

Chinese tourists express confusion and at times fear over checkpoints and ID searches in Tibet.

从松潘出发去若尔盖不到半小时，已经被武警和警察各检查了一次了

收起 | 查看大图 | 向左转 | 向右转



2011-10-1 10:37 来自Android客户端 | 举报

转发 | 收藏 | 评论

I left Sungchu for Zoige [Dzoege] not even half an hour ago, I've already been inspected by People's Armed Police and the regular police once. (Ngaba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province, 2011).

While it is common for security personnel throughout Tibet to check a traveler's identification at various checkpoints, increased ID requirements for all people seeking to enter the Tibet Autonomous Region were publicly announced in February, 2012 by the Lhasa Party Secretary, Qi Zhala. According to text translated by TCHRD, in announcing the new requirements Qi stated that "establishing and improving coordination among the four provinces [Qinghai, Gansu, Yunnan, and Sichuan]," was the motivation behind the new requirements. This new requirement can be seen as a means of identifying and tracking Tibetans who set out to visit Lhasa, the largest Tibetan city and home to several important pilgrimage sites.

As one tourist commented, "ID card' is the most common sentence you'll hear!"

拉萨街头尽是武警、特警、警察、便衣。。。藏族小伙子办个护照或港澳通行证基本上不可能。。。大昭寺边上的屋顶也是隔个10来米站个武警。。。转湖回拉萨途中经历了N回检查身份证。。。给消防车拍了个照要求删除，本想着再来个特警车照的。。。😞这社会怎么啦？维稳成本真是高呀

2012-3-5 19:57 来自新浪微博 | 举报

转发(1) | 收藏 | 评论(7)

On the way back to Lhasa from the lake my ID card was inspected multiple times... If you take a picture of a fire truck they'll make you delete it... Think again about taking a picture of Special Police vehicle... What is wrong with this society? The cost of maintaining stability truly is high! (2012)

妈啊，这也忒刺激了！进入藏区武警扛着枪就上车检查来了，我还傻不愣登举着手机录像呢，结果勒令删掉视频，检查手机检查身份证。MANAMI被带下车登记护照。还好得知我们是好人以后，扛不扛枪的武警态度都很友好。

2012-3-30 17:29 来自三星Galaxy_SIII | 举报

👍 | 转发(1) | 收藏 | 评论(4)

Oh gosh, this is exciting! Entering the Tibetan area our vehicles were inspected by People's Armed Police carrying guns, I was also foolish and bewildered enough to take a cell phone video, they ordered me to delete it, inspecting phones and ID cards. They made us get out of the car to record our passports. Luckily after they realized we are good people, with or without guns the People's Armed Police have a very friendly attitude. (2012)

过了当雄，列车上来几位特警，开始刷身份证，开始个别询问进藏目的，态度很友好，普通话很标准，哈哈~

2012-5-22 12:55 来自iPhone客户端 | 举报

👍 | 转发(1) | 收藏 | 评论(20)

Passing through Damshung, several Special Police boarded the train, they've begun checking ID cards, asking people why they've come to Tibet, their attitude is very friendly, their Mandarin is very standard, haha (2012)

It was in avoiding an ID checkpoint in Lhasa that [one Tibetan woman died and another seriously injured](#) several months after Qi's pronouncement in July, 2012. The two women, Namgyal Tso, who passed away, and Ani Agon, a Buddhist nun, were travelling on pilgrimage from Luchu county, Kanlho (Chinese: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu province (Tibetan area of Amdo), when they took a more dangerous mountain path in order to avoid a checkpoint. It is believed that a number of Tibetans from the areas of Amdo and Kham had recently been forced to leave Lhasa following the self-immolations of [two young Tibetan men outside of the Jokhang temple](#) in the city on May 27, 2012.



Finding 3b: Off the Grid

Chinese tourists find their cell phone and internet service are turned off in Tibetan areas, revealing government efforts to block Tibetans' communication.

Another widely expressed observation noted in these Weibo postings was the blocking of cell phone services and the internet. This clampdown on information sharing has been [highly concentrated in the Ngaba \(Chinese: Aba\) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture](#) in Sichuan province (Tibetan area of Amdo), where [43 out of the 127 Tibetan self-immolations](#) have taken place. This extreme security tactic demonstrates not only the near total government control over electronic communication networks, but the extent to which authorities will act in order to prevent information from getting out of Tibet, especially news regarding [politically charged incidents](#).

关于年宝，昨天更新了一半，原因是，昨夜抵达阿坝县城，这里到处是成群结队的武警，装甲车在街上巡逻，所有网络全部封闭，包括短信，上街吃饭还有警察盘问，电视节目也没几个，十点后手机信号干脆也没了，不知道是不是搞宵禁，只能洗洗睡了😴

2011-8-6 09:38 来自 iPhone 客户端 | 举报

👍 | 转发(2) | 收藏 | 评论(11)

Last night I arrived in the Ngaba county town, here there are throngs of People's Armed Police, armored vehicles are patrolling the streets, all internet access is blocked, including text messages, going out to eat there are still police asking questions, there isn't much on TV, after ten o'clock there wasn't even any cell phone service, I don't know if there's a curfew or not, all I can do is take a shower and go to sleep. (2011)

达日住下，这里的氛围跟阿坝类似，都有些紧张，不过没阿坝那么厉害，那边沿路几处查证件，市区每不到100米就有警察执勤，还有武警防暴大队，市区及周边范围有电话信号但无手机网络信号，市区不让拍照片。街行人及车辆很少。第一次感受如此高规格的情况。

2011-7-19 23:07 来自 Android 客户端 | 举报

👍 | 转发 | 收藏 | 评论(3)

In the town and the surrounding area you can make calls but there's no mobile network, in the town you can't take any pictures. There are very few pedestrians or vehicles on the road. It was the first time I've been in a situation with such high requirements. (2011)

阿坝县城，五十米左右一岗，穿着护具的武警。短信、GPRS封锁。现在到了久治，信号终于恢复了！大雪飘飘下啊！

2011-10-3 10:03 来自 Android 客户端 | 举报

👍 | 转发 | 收藏 | 评论(6)

In the Ngaba county town every fifty or so meters there's a guard post, staffed by People's Armed Police wearing protective gear. SMS and GPS are blocked. (2011)

离开街头站满特警且网络及3G信号完全屏蔽的甘孜县。

2011-7-16 14:58 来自我的索尼Xperia | 举报

👍 | 转发(1) | 收藏 | 评论(8)

Left Kardze county, where the police are full of Special Police standing guard and the wireless and 3G networks are all completely blocked. (2011)

这几天在甘南藏族自治州碌曲县郎木寺镇，由于特殊原因这里屏蔽了手机信号，无法上网。

📍 甘肃省 甘南藏族自治州 合作市 那吾路 - 显示地图

2012-2-5 17:42 来自 iPhone 客户端 | 举报

👍 | 转发(1) | 收藏 | 评论(19)

In Kanlho for the last few days, due to special circumstances the cellular network has been blocked, no way to get online. (2012)



Note About Weibo

Sina Weibo (whose logo is above and used to identify sections in this report) is a Chinese microblogging website, similar to Twitter, owned by the Shanghai-based media conglomerate, Sina Corporation. While there are several Weibo services operating in China (the term “Weibo” translates into English as “microblog”), Sina Weibo is the most popular, making it nearly synonymous with the term “Weibo” itself.



An example of a personal Sina Weibo page.

Despite Weibo's long-standing popularity, the [crackdown on microblogging in China](#) has seen a rise in other forms of social media, namely WeChat (or 'weixin'). Unlike Weibo, WeChat distributes messages exclusively to closed groups of users who must mutually approve their relationship to each other. This not only stands to limit the distribution of messages and images, but also creates a readily identifiable grouping of individuals who share information on a particular topic.

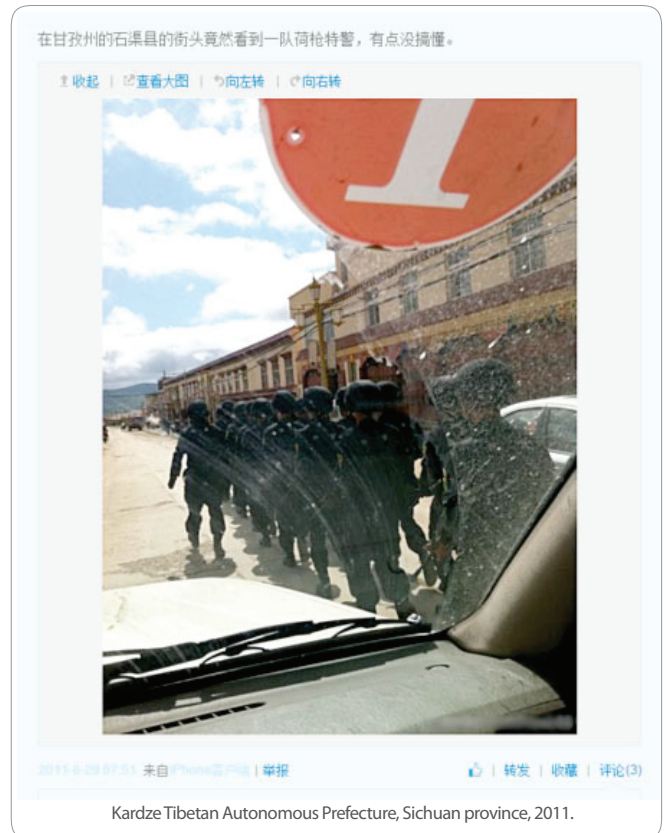


Methodology

ICT has retrieved hundreds of Weibo posts and images, available [here](#), using search terms that combined the names of Tibetan towns, prefectures, monasteries, and regions with different types of Chinese police units (e.g., “Ngaba People’s Armed Police”) or other related words (e.g., “Lhasa sniper”). Because Sina Weibo was [launched in August 2009](#) and hadn’t yet risen to prominence during 2010, the vast majority of posts used in this report were made between 2011 and early 2013. It should be noted that Sina Weibo censors “sensitive” posts using a variety of methods, and users sometimes note this by posting the message given to them by Sina after a post is deleted, which reads “In accordance with the relevant laws and regulations, your post has been deleted.” In addition to the previously noted increase in message deletion rates in Tibetan areas, a [recent investigation conducted by ProPublica](#) into the removal of images from Sina Weibo, further demonstrates the censors’ effectiveness at deleting sensitive posts. All of this raises the probability that many more relevant posts were deleted before they could be retrieved by ICT.

Although ICT searched for Weibo postings in almost every Tibetan county town, province, and major monastery, return rates were far lower in areas outside of the major Chinese tourist routes in Tibet. Thus towns along the Sichuan-Tibet highway, which is popular with Chinese travelers, were far more likely to return numerous posts and images than towns in Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai, for example, which is comparatively little-traveled. Lhasa has become a particularly attractive destination for Chinese tourists, and cities along the Qinghai-Tibet railway such as Golmud and Xining were well-represented. Many of the posts were made by users from large Chinese cities such as Shanghai, Beijing, or Guangzhou.

It should be further noted that ICT has removed the identifying information from postings as a measure of anonymity for the users cited. The photos used in this report are all believed to be original postings by the people who took them, based on technical information that accompanies Weibo posts, along with any text description that may have been provided with the image. Given the subject matter and an extreme pattern of official reprisals against Tibetans for even low-level information sharing, ICT did not retrieve posts made by users who identified themselves as being Tibetan, or who listed their place of residence as being in a Tibetan area, even though such residents could have been Chinese. ICT found no evidence indicating that Chinese tourists were detained for taking photos in Tibetan areas, nor are there known reprisals taken against them for sharing information of the kind included in this report.



这就是我本意的阿坝县城，三年多了，只有冲撞地和那辆摩托车撞过！

This is what I intended in the Ngaba county town, for more than three years, there are only, almost always and not today, the gangster's army! 2011

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[1] Note on geographical terms: ICT uses the term 'Tibet' to refer to all Tibetan areas currently under the jurisdiction of the People's Republic of China. Tibet was traditionally comprised of three main areas: Amdo (northeastern Tibet), Kham (eastern Tibet) and U-Tsang (central and western Tibet). The Tibet Autonomous Region was set up by the Chinese government in 1965 and covers the area of Tibet west of the Driчу or Yangtze River, including part of Kham. The rest of Amdo and Kham have been incorporated into Chinese provinces, and where Tibetan communities were said to have 'compact inhabitancy' in these provinces they were designated Tibetan autonomous prefectures and counties. As a result most of Qinghai and parts of Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces are acknowledged by the Chinese government to be 'Tibetan.'

[2] 'When patriotism is flagging,' *The Economist*, October 10, 2013. <http://www.economist.com/blogs/analects/2013/10/when-patriotism-flagging>

[3] See ICT reports, 'Protests continue in eastern Tibet,' (<http://www.savetibet.org/protests-continue-in-eastern-tibet/>) and 'Tibet at a Turning Point' (http://www.savetibet.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Tibet_at_a_Turning_Point.pdf)

[4] Kai Strittmatter, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 17 July, 2013: „Erleuchtung garantiert“

[5] OpenNet Initiative, August 9, 2012. <https://opennet.net/research/profiles/china>

[6] Suspended death sentences are usually commuted to life in prison, unless the prisoner is alleged to have committed a crime in the first two years of his sentence.