



“When the black cloth was taken off my head, I found myself in a big room with all sorts of torture devices laid out in front of me. They told me to have a look at these devices and I told myself that I was doomed to being beaten that day” - former prisoner and torture survivor Golog Jigme.

Imagine being snatched from the street or even your home. You are loaded into a police car and driven to an unknown location. Your friends, colleagues and family don't know where you are. Nor do you. It is like you have disappeared from the face of the earth.

You don't know why you are being held, you don't know what your captors want from you. They may have something that they want you to confess. They may have decided you have committed a crime.

For scores of Tibetans, this situation is not just some horror film, it is a horrifying reality. Whether they have protested to resist the occupation, written a blog post that the authorities disapproved of, or even just flown their own flag, Tibetans have been taken away, detained without charge, tortured and sentenced to long prison sentences after secret or sham trials.

Enforced disappearances are designed to punish Tibetans who resist or fall foul of the occupation, and to scare other Tibetans away from opposing the occupation or freely expressing their culture. Free Tibet is standing alongside Tibet's hidden prisoners. We want to find the prisoners that China has tried to hide, shine a light on their cases, and raise pressure for their release.

### **Prisoners in the dark**

"They said that however many people like me they killed, nobody would ever find out" - Tenzin Namgyal, Tibetan torture survivor

Tibet is one of the most closed countries on earth. Whether it is people or news, China tries to dictate what gets in and what gets out. The blackest of Tibet's black spots are its prison cells. Cut off from the world, Tibetan prisoners are at grave risk of torture and being killed in prison.

Free Tibet has recorded instances of prisoners being beaten by guards, denied food and being forced to drink their water from the prison latrines. Interrogations and punishments are routinely accompanied by torture, mock executions and attempts to humiliate prisoners.

Prisoners are denied visits from family members and access to lawyers or medical treatment. Some Tibetans have died in prison because they did not receive basic treatment that could have saved their lives.

Much of our information about what goes on in occupied Tibet's prisons comes from former detainees and prisoners, who have since fled Tibet and reached the outside world. Only then do they have the freedom to recount their ordeals.

### **Relatives in the dark**

"My only son has been pushed to death. I am proud of my son and also of what I have done as a small contribution to the Tibetan freedom struggle." - The father of Tenzin Choedak, who died in 2014 aged 33 after six years of torture in Chushul Prison

For family members, friends and fellow students at monasteries and nunneries, the effects of an enforced disappearance are also traumatic. They may not realise at first, when their husband, mother, sister or son does not come home, that it is because they have been snatched by the state.

If they do suspect that one of their relatives has been taken away, they may find their quest for information blocked at every turn, with no information disclosed about their whereabouts, their condition, the crime they are accused of or even if they are in detention at all. They are left to wonder and to worry.

### **Where do they go?**

It is often impossible to say. China has a vast network of detention centres and prisons throughout Tibet including houses, hostels and hotels which act as 'black jail' sites used to punish and extract confessions from Tibetans. It can be difficult to locate any facility in Tibet or find out conditions prisoners are being kept in.

Yet, thanks to the brave testimonials of Tibetans, we can shine a light on some of Tibet's most notorious institutions:

### **What you can do**

"I am one of those who survived prison. There are some older Tibetan prisoners serving long sentences who have a wife and children at home. I wished I could serve their sentences on their behalf and let them go [...] I am committed to speaking to people in the outside world on behalf of my fellow Tibetan political prisoners who are in Chinese prisons." - Gonpo Thinley, a former prisoner and torture survivor.

Free Tibet is campaigning on the cases of six detainees and prisoners. Some of them were arrested for resisting the occupation, others for peacefully expressing their culture. What they have in common is that they have been shut off from the world, with the authorities refusing to reveal details of their condition and exact location.

We want to force the authorities to reveal the location of these prisoners and to push for their release. For each case we have at least one action that you can do to put pressure on the authorities. We need them to hear our voices so that they know that the world is watching.

[See full details here](#)