



REPORT: OVER 500,000 TIBETANS RELOCATED, COERCED INTO LABOUR PROGRAMME



Tibetan workers

25th September 2020

Report draws on over 100 government sources and concludes that hundreds of thousands of Tibetans have undergone forced labour.

A [new report \(https://jamestown.org/program/jamestown-early-warning-brief-xinjiangs-system-of-militarized-vocational-training-comes-to-tibet/\)](https://jamestown.org/program/jamestown-early-warning-brief-xinjiangs-system-of-militarized-vocational-training-comes-to-tibet/) by the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China and the Jamestown Foundation has found evidence of a system of displacement and labour in Tibet, evoking [the use of forced labour \(https://www.vox.com/2020/7/28/21333345/uighurs-china-internment-camps-forced-labor-xinjiang\)](https://www.vox.com/2020/7/28/21333345/uighurs-china-internment-camps-forced-labor-xinjiang) in the Uyghur region.

A notice posted on Tibet Autonomous Region government website and cited in the Jamestown Foundation report states that 543,000 Tibetan rural labourers were trained over the first seven

months of this year, meeting 90 percent of government targets.

According to the report, labour transfers of 55,000 of these Tibetans occurred as they were moved to jobs in other regions both within Tibet and China. A review of policy documents by Reuters revealed that such workers are [“often moved in groups and stay in collective accommodation”](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-rights-tibet-exclusive/exclusive-china-sharply-expands-mass-labor-program-in-tibet-idUSKCN26DoGT) (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-rights-tibet-exclusive/exclusive-china-sharply-expands-mass-labor-program-in-tibet-idUSKCN26DoGT>) .

Similar but smaller labour training centres were reportedly active within Tibet from as early as 2005.

The system of forced labour may also have deeper underlying motivations as both Tibetan regional and district-level policy documents note that these rural workers also receive ideological education.

The CCP has a longstanding policy of attempting to eradicate this [traditional rural lifestyle](https://freetibet.org/about/nomads) (<https://freetibet.org/about/nomads>) and has often used [poverty alleviation](https://freetibet.org/news-media/na/chinese-authorities-relocate-over-fifty-tibetans) (<https://freetibet.org/news-media/na/chinese-authorities-relocate-over-fifty-tibetans>) as a justification. The apparent forceful nature of this labour programme bears similarities to previous actions by the CCP such as [mass relocations](https://freetibet.org/news-media/na/around-400-families-were-forced-relocate-their-ancestral-land) (<https://freetibet.org/news-media/na/around-400-families-were-forced-relocate-their-ancestral-land>) and [land ownership confiscations](https://freetibet.org/news-media/na/two-tibetan-nomads-arrested-following-their-resistance-land-ownership-confiscations) (<https://freetibet.org/news-media/na/two-tibetan-nomads-arrested-following-their-resistance-land-ownership-confiscations>) .

The report, titled “Xinjiang’s Militarized Vocational Training System Comes to Tibet”, draws links between these training centres and use of forced labour in the Uyghur region, governed by the CCP as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). This is especially significant given that [Chen Quanguo](https://jamestown.org/program/chen-quanguo-the-strongman-behind-beijings-securitization-strategy-in-tibet-and-xinjiang/) (<https://jamestown.org/program/chen-quanguo-the-strongman-behind-beijings-securitization-strategy-in-tibet-and-xinjiang/>), the former Communist Party Secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region (2011 - 2015), is now Party Secretary of the XUAR. Nevertheless, the report does note that the scheme in Tibet is [“potentially less coercive”](https://jamestown.org/program/jamestown-early-warning-brief-xinjiangs-system-of-militarized-vocational-training-comes-to-tibet/) (<https://jamestown.org/program/jamestown-early-warning-brief-xinjiangs-system-of-militarized-vocational-training-comes-to-tibet/>) than that in the Uyghur region.

The state media reports and policy documents provided by Adrian Zenz, the author of the [original report](https://jamestown.org/program/jamestown-early-warning-brief-xinjiangs-system-of-militarized-vocational-training-comes-to-tibet/) (<https://jamestown.org/program/jamestown-early-warning-brief-xinjiangs-system-of-militarized-vocational-training-comes-to-tibet/>) and an independent researcher, have been reviewed and corroborated [by Reuters](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-rights-tibet-exclusive/exclusive-china-sharply-expands-mass-labor-program-in-tibet-idUSKCN26DoGT). (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-rights-tibet-exclusive/exclusive-china-sharply-expands-mass-labor-program-in-tibet-idUSKCN26DoGT>)

In a [statement yesterday](https://freetibet.org/news-media/pr/free-tibet-condemns-china-coercing-500000-tibetans-forced-labour) (<https://freetibet.org/news-media/pr/free-tibet-condemns-china-coercing-500000-tibetans-forced-labour>) , Free Tibet backed calls by the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China for sanctions be imposed on those responsible for the forced labour programme in Tibet, as well as calling on businesses to investigate any sign Tibetan forced labour in their supply chains, and the United Nations installs a Special Rapporteur to investigate forced labour and ethnic persecution in the People’s Republic of China. Free Tibet also went further, stating:

”There is no long—term solution for Chinese repression in Tibet that does not involve freedom for the Tibetan people. Governments around the world currently recognise Tibet as part of China, a historical misunderstanding that flies in face of the wishes of the Tibetan people. Tibetans *must* be allowed to determine their own future, and it is up to the governments of the world to confront the Chinese Communist Party with this reality. To avoid this challenge is to invite further repression and destruction upon Tibet.”