

Figures

Refugees¹

About 126,000 Tibetans have had to leave their country. Most of them live in India (98,000 since 1995) and Nepal (around 20,500). Many are children whom their parents send to live in a safer place and receive Tibetan and Buddhist education denied them under occupation.

Implantation of Settlers

200,000 troops of the Chinese *People's Liberation Army* (PLA) are permanently stationed in Tibet. 7.5 million Han Chinese also have settled in Tibet, mainly concentrated in the eastern regions of Kham and Amdo that China has detached from the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and annexed to Chinese provinces.

As the settlers are estimated to be between 2.5 to 3 million in the TAR, this region is still Tibetan in majority, yet only because most Tibetans live in rural areas. Settlers in Lhasa and Shigatse, the two major cities of the TAR, outnumbered the indigenous population several times. This makes Tibetans a minority in their own country: 69%, including Xining and Haidong; 49.8% without those territories (2000 census).

Forced Eviction

Most Chinese-conducted forced eviction operation in Tibet are disguised behind ostensibly positive reasons. Since the occupation of Tibet in 1950, PLA squads raided and looted homes of Tibetan "rebels" under the pretext of redistributing wealth in Tibet, PLA squads actually to break the resistance, forcibly evicting their families or making them stay with their livestock. The squads would return a few days later to requisition the owner's properties. In the late 1990s, "reorganizing" Tibetan Buddhism meant limiting the number of residents admitted in religious institutions. Others had to leave, or were forcibly evicted. In Lhasa, the Development Plan that was carried out in 1980–2000 resulted in the eviction of 10,000 Tibetans from the old city. The capital now remains only about 1% Tibetan.

The 2001 "help the poor" scheme uprooted impoverished Tibetans from their original dwelling to have them move into new, dense, high-cost and culturally inappropriate habitations. Other policies such as the creation of Special Economic Zones dislocate Tibetan farmers. Similarly, the Chinese authorities have planned to displace 27,679 Tibetans nomads forcibly settling them in another province under the pretexts of "reforestation" and "environmental protection." "Poverty alleviation in western China" was the name given to a World Bank-financed project in Qinghai with devastating effects for Tibetans. Dam building and the often-induced floods also have caused the forced eviction of thousands. In all cases, any protest is severely repressed, as the protestors are considered as "splittists" (a term is used for all

Tibetans who defend their national interests and rights, especially self-determination, and consequently claim real autonomy or independence).

Implantation of Settlers

Chinese authorities carry out two main forms of settler implantation in Tibet: (1) forced population transfer, meaning the involuntary resettlement of Chinese government officials, scientists, engineers etc., which was the most common between 1950 and 1979, and has been intensifying once more since 1995; and (2) "voluntary migration," whereby thousands of unemployed Chinese have migrated to Tibet looking for work since the reforms of the 1980s. The State proposes them high incentives, from much higher salaries to tax breaks and housing subsidies.

The Chinese presence has been primarily urban, but settlers now are moving to rural and remote areas. A high number of workers also has been transferred in the context of dam building. Given the great water resources of the Tibetan Plateau, the projects multiply, while one alone can bring 100,000 workers. The Gormo-Lhasa railway construction is another example of noxious "development." Its construction, launched in 2003, has brought an estimated 67,000 laborers from China.

Beijing exploits its occupation of Tibet as an outlet for China's burgeoning population. As in the case of forced relocation, the slogans raised to promote and justify the implantation of settlers ring very positive, like the "Giving Help to Tibet" policy. Most measures actually erode Tibetans' land, national resources and habitat.

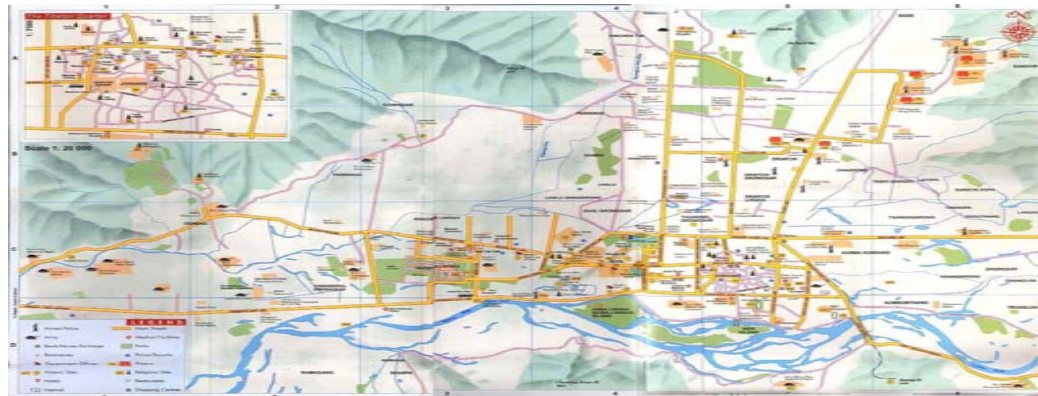
¹ There are no comprehensive figures concerning forced eviction and internally displaced Tibetans. Yet, we know about some specific projects that induce displacement, and have reported them as examples here.

Population Transfer in International Law

The UN Committee on Economic, social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), in its General Comment No 7, has defined “forced eviction” as “the permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families and/or communities from their homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms CESCR and the UN Commission on Human Rights have determined forced eviction as a grave violation of human rights, particularly the human right to adequate housing.

The UN Special Rapporteurs have defined population transfer as resulting from economic or political processes that are massive or incremental, direct (military operations, deportations, evictions or implantations) or indirect (administrative measures, impoverishment or economic incitements). They are discriminatory, systematic and coercive, and imply a political will.

Population transfer has been declared illegal in most international treaties and laws since the *Allied Declaration on German War Crimes* in 1942. The latest and its strongest condemnation is found in the 1998 *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court* that defined deportation, forcible transfer of population and implantation of settlers as war crimes.



Rapid urbanization in Lhasa has led to a seven-fold increase in population in the city over the past 40 years, from 30,000 in 1959 to an estimated 200,000 today, with more than 60% of this total estimated to be Chinese.



Chinese apartment and office buildings in central Lhasa reflect the demographic transformation in occupied Tibet.



Chinese military installation near Lake Kokonor.