



# INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

## Refugees

<https://savetibet.org/why-tibet/refugees>

### **China's brutal oppression has forced thousands of Tibetans into exile.**

In 1959, the Dalai Lama and about 80,000 Tibetans were forced to escape to India after China's takeover of Tibet. Beginning in the 1980s and until the 2000s, a few thousand Tibetans used to flee every year. But recently, the Chinese government has severely cracked down on their ability to escape.

In 2006, Chinese police [shot and killed a 17-year-old Tibetan nun](#) as she attempted to cross the Himalayas on her way to freedom. She was just a 20-minute walk from the border with Nepal when she died in the snow.

Tibetans try to escape their homeland because China has turned Tibet into a police state where Tibetans can't freely study and [practice their religion](#), assert their Tibetan identity in a meaningful way or [enjoy the same privileges as Chinese](#).

Across the Tibetan diaspora, the Chinese government spies on refugees and threatens to harm their family members back in Tibet. Continued and increased Chinese pressure forces Nepal to crack down on the rights of Tibetan refugees living in that country.

Many Tibetans have achieved great things in exile—especially the Dalai Lama, who has lived as a refugee for most of his life. But as the Dalai Lama has said, Tibetans want to return home and rebuild their own country.

