

A Rational, Legal and Ethical Challenge to the RAND Europe Report *A night-time lighting analysis of Tibet's (Xizang's) prison and detention centers*

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Summary: The report *A night-time lighting analysis of Tibet's (Xizang's) prison and detention centers* released by RAND Europe, alleges Xizang (Tibet) is “engaging in preventive repression”. Through “night-time lighting analysis”, the Report claims to have discovered that prisons and detention centers in Xizang are implementing “mass securitization and detention”, which is shifting “towards longer-term imprisonment and detention...as opposed to shorter-term detention”. In response to this conclusion, the Human Rights Institute at Southwest University of Political Science and Law formed a team and conducted specialized research in Lasa, Rikaze and other areas in Xizang. Considering the research results, we found that the Report by RAND Europe not only lack scientific rigor in the use of research methods but also deviate from the fundamental value of objectivity and neutrality in its presupposed arguments and selection of evidence. Furthermore, its so-called “research findings” are full of subjective fabrications, arbitrary imaginations, and unsupported claims, completely disregarding the objective reality in Xizang. In recent years, Xizang Autonomous Region (XAR) has integrated the comprehensive advancement of the rule of law into the overall development agenda, continuously enhancing the level of governing Xizang in accordance with the law. It deeply promotes the full coverage of respecting and safeguarding human rights throughout the entire chain, process, and aspects of legislation, law enforcement, and judicial practices. Prisons and detention centers at all levels safeguard the basic human rights of prisoners and individuals under supervision in accordance with the law and regulations, including the rights to health, food, education, visitation, communication, as well as the rights to appeal, complain, and accuse. Xizang has achieved historic progress in the legal protection of human rights.

Introduction

At the end of July 2023, the European Branch of RAND Corporation – an international policy research agency – released a report titled ***A night-time lighting analysis of Tibet's (Xizang's) prison and detention centers*** (hereinafter referred as the Report), alleging that the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government are “engaging in preventive repression” in Xizang, as part of their nationwide “stability maintenance” strategy. The actions include “detaining, persecuting, and convicting Tibetans for non-violent forms of protest and other expressions of dissent such as assisting or supporting self-immolations and carrying pictures of the Dalai Lama”. The RAND report claims that the “knowledge base available to the international community on the imprisonment and detention” in Xizang remains insufficient. Due to the scant available evidence, the Report employed an “innovative method” – using satellite-based sensors to measure and analyze the satellite imagery and night-time lighting data of 79 recorded prisons and detention centers in Xizang. The Report draws a conclusion that the Chinese government is implementing “mass securitization and detention” in Xizang, and since 2019, night-time lighting in some facilities display a trend of growth, which “suggests a possible shift towards longer-term imprisonment and detention of Tibetan dissidents as opposed to shorter-term detention”. The

release of the Report has triggered a wave of speculative hype in some international media and the 14th Dalai Lama clique.

Is the situation described in the Report true? Following the principle of “No investigation, no comments”, in September 2023, the Human Rights Institute at Southwest University of Political Science and Law formed a team and conducted a 7-day specialized research in Lasa, Rikaze and other areas in Xizang. During the research, the team conducted in-depth interviews with nearly 150 officials from the XAR Hight Court, XAR Procuratorate, XAR Department of Public Security, XAR Department of Justice and the Rikaze Bureau of Public Security. The team also paid visits to the XAR Prison, Lasa Prison, Lasa Detention Centre and Rikaze Detention Center, explored the reception halls, legal aid centers, prosecution offices, medical centers, kitchens and dorm rooms, and interviewed prison officers, polices and the prisoners.

Based on our in-depth research into the situation of human rights protection in Xizang over the years and the findings from this specialized field research, we found that the so called “findings” as described in the RAND Report, including the “preventive repression” “mass securitization and detention” “long-term imprisonment and detention”, are full of subjective fabrications, arbitrary imaginations, and unsupported claims. The Report disregarded the enormous efforts Xizang has made in advancing the rule of law and the significant achievements in legal protection of human rights. It is completely inconsistent with the objective reality in Xizang.

This report intends to take a neutral third-party perspective, based on field research, to analyze the methodology, positions, techniques, and main content outlined in the Report. The goal is to present a genuine, comprehensive, and multidimensional view of the current human rights protection status in Xizang, particularly focusing on human rights protection in prisons and detention centers, for external audiences.

I. The Examination of the RAND Report's Techniques, Positions, and Methodologies

1. A Report Below Expertise

The Report is RAND Corporation's first report on Xizang. After its release, some media in the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and India, together with the 14th Dalai Lama clique, immediately followed up upon the issue, asserting that the Report “provides rare new leads to understand the stability maintenance and control policy implemented by the Chinese government” in XAR, proves that Xizang “pose a threat to respecting international human rights standard and rule-based international order”. Aiming to maximize international influence and further promote the internationalization of Xizang issues, RAND Europe and some media used eye-catching keywords such as “the first report on Tibet (Xizang)” “mass securitization and detention” “repression” “long-term imprisonment”. However, an undeniable fact is that the Report is an amateur report below expertise, lacking essential professionalism.

The writers of the Report have no professional background in Xizang study, have never been to Xizang, know little about Xizang and people of different ethnicities in Xizang, and have never conducted research or published related works on Xizang, not to mention any empirical research experience in Xizang. This Report simply replicates previous routines and techniques in manipulating the so-called “re-education camp” issue in Xinjiang into Xizang, drawing negative conclusions based solely on hearsay and arbitrary judgments.

2. An “Innovative” Methodology of High Confusion

According to the Report, Xizang is becoming “more closed”, an “information black hole” to the external world that remains inaccessible for most foreign researchers and journalists to visit and obtain primary data for their research. Due to such predicament, RAND Europe employed an innovative methodology – the night-time lighting analysis. It first selected 79 detention facilities from the database built by the Tibet (Xizang) Research Project, then calculated night-time lighting estimates using monthly cloud-free composite raster images from the U.S. NOAA VIIRS Day/Night Band to generate trends in night-time lighting changes, and correlate it with historical overhead satellite data. Lastly, through analyzing the trends in night-time lighting, it explored the overall development of the detention system in Xizang.

While analyzing prisons and detention centers in Xizang using night-time lighting methods, the report is based on a fundamental premise – that Xizang is an information “blackhole”, inaccessible for the external observers who cannot obtain primary data and first-hand information. Therefore, the use of night-time lighting analysis was adopted out of necessity. The question is, is Xizang really an information “blackhole” isolated from the rest of the world? Obviously, such presumption does not reflect the truth.

Xizang is located on the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, with an average altitude over 4000 meters above sea level. Due to its unique geographical location and the high-altitude, oxygen-deprived environment, Xizang was once considered by many as a remote and isolated place. During the past 70 years since its peaceful liberation, Xizang has achieved a leapfrog development in its economy and society, continuously increasing its openness to the outside world, marking a historic transformation from isolation to openness. Every year, China invites multiple delegations of foreign officials, scholars and journalists to visit Xizang, to witness the economic and social modernization of Xizang. Every year, the number of foreign tourists visiting Xizang reaches hundreds of thousands. Whether it’s Shangri-la or information “blackhole”, they all stem from the romanticized thoughts or deep-rooted biases of those who have never once visited Xizang. For these individuals, even when faced with the undeniable truth, it is difficult to dispel their prejudices. For instance, regarding the sensationalization of boarding schools in Xizang since last year by some Western countries and media, in May 2023, China Insight from Phoenix TV invited Anze, an observer from Latvia, to visit boarding schools in Xizang and showcase the true story of boarding school education in Xizang to the world. Nevertheless, there are still some individuals who are “playing possum”, continuing to hype and attack.

RAND Europe claims the use of night-time lighting analysis is an innovative method. However, is the method truly of scientific and innovative nature? When terms like “night-time lighting”, “satellite imagery”, and “Infrared Imaging” are stacked together, they create significant confusion, often leading people to a false sense of awe and making them believe that the research methods are objective, scientific, and rational. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes apparent that the so-called “night-time lighting method” is nothing more than a camouflage in the garb of technology, lacking any genuine “hardcore” technical foundation.

To begin with, prisons and detention centers in Xizang are all established and operated in accordance with laws and regulations including the *Prison Law of the People’s Republic of China* and the *Regulations of the People’s Republic of China on Detention Centers*. The amount and names of prisons and detention centers can be easily accessed through public search channels, rendering the need for data mining and filtering through the so-called satellite imagery unnecessary. What’s more, the Report categorizes prisons and detention centers in Xizang into

four types – namely high security prison, high security detention center, large low security detention center and small low security detention center – according to footprint, significant support infrastructure and watchtowers. Such categorization is not only unscientific but also contains factual errors. For instance, the Report claims there are 10 high security prisons in Xizang, which is inconsistent with the facts, as there are only 6 prisons throughout the entire XAR, namely the XAR Prison, Lasa Prison, Qushui Prison, Bomi Prison, Juvenile Offender Reformatory and the Judicial Police Hospital.

3. A Challenge to the Objectivity of the RAND Report

RAND Europe claims to uphold an objective and neutral value position. However, upon reviewing the Report, it is evident that both in the presupposed arguments and the selection of evidence, they deviate from the fundamental stance of objectivity and neutrality.

A scientific investigative or research report should not presuppose subjectivity, especially negative conclusions. However, the Report starts from a presumption of guilt. The opening statement in the Summary starts with “Authorities in Tibet (Xizang) are engaging in preventive repression towards their population. As part of their nationwide ‘stability maintenance’ strategy, they are detaining, persecuting, and convicting Tibetans...”. The assertion of “preventive repression” establishes the foundational tone of the Report, with the entire text dedicated to substantiating this viewpoint.

According to the Report, the “precise workings, nature, and scale of the Chinese Communist Party’s efforts to imprison and detain Tibetans, however, remain poorly understood. The lack of evidence on many issues, especially on the so-called ‘vocational training centers’ and detention through the criminal justice system, is not evidence of the absence of repression. Rather, it highlights a need for further research to address many of the research gaps and to better understand the situation”. The Report also writes: “The first structural impediment that most foreign researchers working on Tibet are confronted with is access to primary data. Tibet remains an information black hole. China as a whole is subject to some of the greatest restrictions on press freedom in the world...” “Many foreign journalists and researchers therefore either use Chinese government and media sources, which may be skewed and hard to verify...” “This can limit verification through a lack of multiple independent sources (i.e., triangulation), which has implications for the completeness, reliability, and validity of findings on Tibet.” Based upon the above judgement, the Report states it primarily depends upon two sources to evaluate detention system in Xizang: one is secondary English information – excluding any consultation with Chinese sources; the other is 19 semi-structured interviews with scholars, non-governmental organizations and advocacy organizations. The Report also claims for security reasons and the principle of “do no harm”, the study did not involve the participation of any individual living inside Xizang, nor did it seek to gain information from inside the facilities and prisons. The Report’s rhetoric regarding the choice of “evidence” may seem convincing, but upon closer scrutiny, many issues emerge, completely contradicting the principle of objectivity and neutrality.

First of all, the Report’s allegations against the Xizang authorities for “imprisoning and persecuting” Xizang minorities originate from two primary sources. One is Lobsang Sangay, former head of Tibet (Xizang) Exile Government, who repeatedly disseminated such accusations. In particular in 2019, when interviewed by BBC, Lobsang Sangay said that “Tibetan dissidents are imprisoned somewhere in Tibet (Xizang) similar with Xinjiang Uyghur camps”. The other one

is Adrian Zenz's article regarding the vocational education and training centers and forced labor in Xizang. The viewpoints of Lobsang Sangay and Adrian Zenz have led to misinformation, both are baseless speculations and malicious attacks, greatly deviating from the facts. Robert Barnett, an expert in Xizang studies from Columbia University, pointed out in his article that Lobsang Sangay self-made most of his judgement about Xizang, with the purpose to suggest that situation in Xizang is as "worse" as Xinjiang, therefore giving Xizang a "competitive victimhood" role. Adrian Zenz is the creator of the "forced labor myth" in Xizang. However there exists no credible evidence supporting his "creation". Adrian Zenz has made disastrous mistake in this regard. Unfortunately, seems like RAND Europe is now stepping on the same wrong path.

Secondly, the Report selected only secondary English information sources as its evidence, and excluded Chinese sources. The very choice of researching Xizang in China without considering local literature neither respect basic norms in conducting research, nor conform to the principle of objectivity and neutrality. Based on the English information sources chosen for the Report, it appears that a selective and applicable approach has been employed – all materials and articles are produced by some anti-China forces with deep-rooted prejudice and individuals who uphold extreme bias against China. For the English information sources that do not support the presupposed stance of the Report are however, ignored. As being pointed out by Robert Barnett, many researches have demonstrated that it is impossible for Xizang to operate a large number of "camps". However, RAND Europe did not reference these research findings. In fact, such research conclusions were not even mentioned in the report.

Lastly, the Report contends that the information provided by the Chinese government and official media can be difficult to verify and couldn't be triangulated through multiple independent sources. However, at the same time, it unquestioningly accepted the selected English information sources, seemingly assuming their inherent authenticity and accuracy without the need for cross-verification from independent sources.

4. A "Conclusion" without Substantial Evidence

A closer examination of the Report reveals that its conclusions primarily stem from two factors: imagination and forced correlations and deductions based on some so-called "evidence".

First of all, the Report is rife with expressions such as "cannot rule out the possibility that...", "it is possible that...", "likely provide evidence of...", and "most likely due to...", indicating a strong inclination towards imagination, suggestion, and inducement. For instance, in the Report it writes, "...in some cases the lack of evidence – is not, however, evidence of an absence of repression..." "the lack of evidence readily available to foreign audiences does not, however, indicate an absence of repression..." "a possible shift towards longer-term imprisonment and detention of Tibetan dissidents as opposed to shorter-term detention", and so forth. In the absence of understanding the true facts, the Report does not adopt a stance of silence or neutrality. Instead, it attempts to strongly imply and induce the others to believe in the alleged "repression" and "mass detention" in Xizang.

Secondly, the Report makes a blatant attempt to forcibly associate Xizang with labels such as "re-education" and "forced labor". The United States and some Western countries had adopted such strategy to attack Xinjiang with topics including the "vocational training centers" and "forced labor", triggering negative public opinions in the international society. Apparently, the Report is seeking to perpetuate the discussion strategies used in the Xinjiang issue, directly transplanting

topics like “re-education” and “forced labor” to Xizang. However, the above-mentioned issues simply do not exist in Xizang. Even though RAND Europe fails to provide any compelling evidence, it continues to draw arguments such as “an important but still poorly understood mechanism of stability maintenance is the use of so-called ‘vocational training centers’, detention facilities and prisons”, or “...the implementation of a so-called ‘vocational training and labor-transfer’ scheme in Tibet (Xizang) has raised international alarm at the prospect of Tibetans becoming subject to mass securitization and, especially, detention on a scale and intensity similar to that currently seen in Xinjiang...”, to indicate that “re-education” and “forced labor” exist in Xizang.

Thirdly, the Report arbitrarily associate “lighting enhancement” with “mass long-term imprisonment and detention”. One major argument of the Report is that by demonstrating the growth of night-time lighting in some prisons and high security facilities, to contend the imprisonment and detention of Xizang dissidents is shifting from shorter-term towards longer-term. It is a sheer arbitrary association without any logic and foundation – the former cannot logically lead to the latter, and there is no inherent connection between the two. Even if the growth of night-time lighting does exist, it could be caused by various factors. For example, facility infrastructure renovation in prisons and detention centers, including replacing old light bulb with LED devices inside living and guarding quarters, would objectively lead to the growth of night-time lighting; the constant expansion of urban planning and increase of housing density and human activities along with the rapid economic and social development of Xizang, and the resulting growth and extension of night-time lighting, could potentially affect the lighting levels near the areas of prisons and detention centers.

Fourthly, the Report intends to limit the detainees and prisoners to the Zang minorities. When describing the people in prisons and detention centers, the Report adopts terms such as “dissidents” “political prisoners” and the “Tibetans”, attempting to emphasize that those incarcerated are not of Han or other ethnicities, but only Zang minorities, who are detained due to expressing dissent, advocating for “unauthorized” political stance, believing or practicing religious behaviors. The consequence is a shift in detention from shorter-term to longer-term, and being tortured, raped and sexually exploited in prisons and detention centers.

Clearly, the Report’s analysis of the population constitution, causes, and consequences of prisons and detention centers in Xizang is absurd and arbitrary. Relying solely on some highly biased English information sources and the so-called analysis of night-time lighting, it is impossible to determine the ethnicity constitution, quantity, nature of offense, duration, and specific conditions within the premises. The Report has also noticed such paradox. For example, it on one hand states there is lack of sufficient evidence to reveal the real situations of prisons and detention centers in Xizang, while on the other hand, it claims that “accounts of torture, rape and sexual abuse during imprisonment in specific detention facilities and prisons have been reported”. Moreover, on one hand, the Report claims that the number of detention facilities alone cannot serve as the sole indicator for assessing the scale and intensity of detention, the detention rate can provide more accurate data, but this information is currently unavailable. On the other hand, it continuously emphasizes Xizang is engaged in mass “detention” “persecution” against Zang minorities. However, the Report draws a negative conclusion based upon its predisposed opinions. As Robert Barnett said, “using their methodology, there is no way to know the growth of activities in these facilities correlates political nature or any abuses. However, they tried very hard to invent this correlation in this Analysis”.

Another point worth mentioning is that RAND Europe had exhausted its effort but failed to find any newly established “prisons and detention facilities”, so it had to admit that “almost all of these facilities were built before 2011”. However, begrudgingly, it added unwarranted speculations and attacks, saying “we cannot rule out the possibility that Chen Quanguo may have repurposed existing facilities for political purposes upon his arrival” and “This trend suggests a possible shift towards longer term imprisonment and detention of Tibetan dissidents as opposed to shorter-term detention”.

5. A Report underlined by Money Politics

RAND Europe claims that to ensure the independence and neutrality of their research and analysis, they avoid both the appearance and reality of financial and other conflicts of interest through staff training, project screening, and a policy of mandatory disclosure. They achieve transparency in their research activities by disclosing the sources of research funding and ensuring intellectual independence. They also assert themselves as a non-profit research organization, stating that their publications do not necessarily reflect the views of their research clients and sponsors. However, from the contents of the Report, we were unable to find the claimed independence, neutrality, and non-profit nature. Instead, we observed biases and a non-neutral stance catering to profit-driven motives and meeting the demands of the purchasing party. Robert Barnett pointed out in his article, “I have talked with RAND early before and tried to explain to them that relying on technology only cannot find anything valuable. And the techniques they employed are impractical and invalid, which is a wrong approach to research. It turns out that they are not interested about my view. The only thing matters to them is making profit”.

II. The Rule of Law and Legal Protection of Human Rights in Xizang

There is a basic predisposition throughout the RAND Report, that “authorities in Tibet (Xizang) are engaging in preventive repression towards their population. As part of their nationwide ‘stability maintenance’ strategy, they are detaining, persecuting, and convicting Tibetans without due process of law or any justifiable cause, which triggers a large-scale human rights violation”. Regarding to this, our team conducted in-depth researches on the implementation of “Governing Xizang in Accordance with the Law”, and identified discrepancies between the Report’s claims and reality.

In August 2015, CPC Central Committee held the 6th Xizang Work Forum, and formulated 5 working principles, which are, governing Xizang in accordance with the law, enrich people and prosper Xizang, long-term infrastructure construction in Xizang, uniting people and solidifying foundation. Five years later, in August 2020, CPC Central Committee held the 7th Xizang Work Forum, which established the Xizang Governance Strategy in the New Era, and highlighted the working principles raised in the previous forum as one of the strategies. Governing Xizang in Accordance with the Law ranked as the first principle in both the 6th and 7th forum. In recent years, XAR has integrated the comprehensive advancement of the rule of law into its overall development agenda, continuously enhancing the level of governing Xizang in accordance with the law. The tangible achievements of comprehensively governing Xizang in accordance with the law lay a solid legal foundation for the long-term stability and high-quality development of Xizang in the new era. As of 2022, the People’s Congress of the XAR and its Standing Committee had formulated and implemented 160 local regulations and statutory resolutions and decisions of a regulatory nature. They ensure that the rule of law contributes to maintaining stability, facilitating

development, protecting the eco-environment, safeguarding the borders, and organizing other matters involving social governance and the people's wellbeing.

The top priority of governing Xizang in accordance with the law is to uphold the authority of the Constitution and the law, adhering to the principle that all are equal before the law. The Constitution of the People's Republic of China stipulates that "All ethnic groups of the People's Republic of China are equal. The state shall protect the lawful rights and interests of all ethnic minorities and uphold and promote relations of equality, unity, mutual assistance and harmony among all ethnic groups." "All citizens of the People's Republic of China are equal before the law." The principle in the Constitution that all ethnic groups of the People's Republic of China are equal and the principle that all are equal before the law are consistently upheld and abide by in Xizang. Stability maintenance is strictly limited within the legal frame and practiced under the guidance of legal thinking and legal methods. The only cause of conviction and punishment is the violation of the law. There is no detention without just cause, no illegal incarceration, no freedom deprivation and persecution targeting specific ethnic groups or communities, not to mention any differentiated punishment against Zang minorities and religious believers.

The Constitution and the Criminal Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China have explicitly specified the conditions and procedures for implementing coercive measures such as arrest and detention. During our field research, we learned that law enforcement and judicial authorities at all levels in Xizang strictly adhere to legal regulations. They continuously standardize coercive measures, reduce the use of custodial coercive measures, vigorously promote the reform of the criminal justice system centered around the trial, and actively improve leniency systems such as plea bargaining. In Xizang, the conviction rate in the first instance is as high as 98.32%, and the leniency rate for cases where the defendant pleads guilty and accepts punishment is as high as 81.13%. Legal defense by lawyers in criminal cases has achieved full coverage, and there are no extrajudicial penalties or extrajudicial executions without due legal procedures. According to the 2022 data, the satisfaction rate of the public across all ethnicity groups with law enforcement and judicial authorities reached 92.61%.

The Constitution and The Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy clearly stipulates the System of Regional National Autonomy. People of all ethnicities in Xizang enjoy the various rights conferred by laws to manage state and local affairs. They also widely and fully exercise democratic rights in their daily lives, including the right to be informed, participate, express opinions, and supervise state and social affairs. They have the right to criticize and offer suggestions to state organs and government officials, as well as freedom of speech, publication, assembly, association, procession, and demonstration. There is no "political prisoner" in Xizang, all lawful demands and expressions are protected by the law, and individuals will not be punished for exercising rights such as criticism and suggestions.

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China expressly provides that "citizens of the People's Republic of China have freedom of religious belief". In Xizang, various religions coexist, including but not limited to Bon, Tibetan Buddhism, Catholicism and Islam. All religions and religious sects are equal, and all religious believers and non-believers are treated with equal respect and protection. All normal religious activities conducted by citizens of all ethnicities in places of religious activities and in their own homes in accordance with customary religious practices, are managed by religious groups and citizens themselves, and protected by the law. No citizen is discriminated against, suppressed or treated unfairly on account of his or her religious

beliefs or lack thereof. The region today hosts over 1,700 sites for Tibetan Buddhism activities, approximately 46,000 Buddhist monks and nuns, four mosques, about 12,000 native Muslims, and one Catholic church with over 700 believers. Over 1,700 religious and folk activities including the Shoton Festival, Butter Lamp Festival, Saga Dawa Festival, and the walks around lakes and mountains help to preserve the solemn traditional rituals and demonstrate new vitality with modern cultural elements. The situation described in the Report that “authorities have forced monks, nuns and villagers to undergo re-education through the destruction of religious heritage sites” does not exist. The State law outweighs religious rules, while religion believers are first and foremost citizens. Some “monks, nuns and villagers” being penalized and convicted according to the law due to their acts that violated the provisions of the law, is of no correlation to their religious beliefs. We found no cases in which people were arrested and convicted on the basis of believing religions.

After the release of the RAND Report, the 14th Dalai Lama clique smugly proclaimed the Report to be the second major document that discloses the human rights issue in Xizang since the release of the Human Rights Report on the Tibetan Epidemic. Who is more progressive and who falls behind, and who is genuinely and effectively safeguarding the basic human rights of Xizang people, can be simply revealed by comparing the protection of human rights by the rule of law in Xizang with the law and legal practices in old Xizang under the feudal serfdom system.

The Thirteen Codes and the Sixteen Codes implemented in old Xizang divided people into three classes and nine grades. People are explicitly assigned with unequal status, with very few noblemen, living buddhas and high-ranking officials being the upper-class. The serfs and slaves, who accounted for 95% of the total population of Xizang, being the lower-class. The ranking determines people’s worth, while the value of people’s life is also stratified. The life of an upper-class person is worth its body-weight in gold, while those of a lower-class is valued as a piece of grass rope.

The three major ruling groups were also landlords in old Xizang, who maintained the feudal serfdom system through barbaric and cruel laws imposed by judicial organs and courts set up within their scopes of power and control. Apart from prisons run by the feudal authority, each large monasteries and aristocrats would set up their own penitentiaries and private jails, where instruments of torture were kept and private tribunals were held. They engaged in veridiction, penalizing, flogging and torturing serfs, had them chained and shackled. Volumes of files in Zang language documents explicitly dozens of savage punishments meted out to serfs, including cutting off the tongue, nose, hands and feet, wearing stone hat, gouging out the eyes, pulling out tendons, skinning, drowning, and even feeding them to scorpions. The Snang Rtse Shag, located to the north of the Dazhao Temple in Lasa, used to be the judiciary of old Xizang. The place was notoriously known as a “living hell”, where serfs were tortured and slaughtered at will to supply the upper class of local officials and monks in the Kashag region with sacrificial offerings, including human head, skin, flesh, heart, and intestines, during chanting certain scriptures. The private temple management agency Chikyong Lajang in Dekyong Dzong set up by Chikyong, the Deputy Scribe of the 14th Dalai Lama, had killed and mauled over 500 serfs and lower-class monks, imprisoned 121, exiled 89, forced slavered 538, forced to flee 1025, broken up 72 marriages, and raped 484 women.

In conclusion, in the New Era, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese Government, Xizang has thoroughly implemented the rule of law. It deeply promotes the

full coverage of respecting and safeguarding human rights throughout the entire chain, process, and aspects of legislation, law enforcement, and judicial practices, continuously enhancing the protection of human rights in accordance with the law. Whereas in the old Xizang, the law was enacted to serve and preserve the theocratic feudal serfdom, devoid of any protection of the rights of the people.

III. Management of Prisons and detention centers in Xizang and Measures to protect Human Rights

Through our field research, the team learned that the prison management system in Xizang strictly abides by the provisions of the Prisons Law of the People's Republic of China and other laws and regulations. The prison work guideline of "combining punishment with rehabilitation, with the aim of reforming individuals" is conscientiously implemented. Under the general requirement of the strictness, standardization, fairness, and civilization of law enforcement, emphasizing building the civilized detention facilities in accordance with the law, public security organs continuously enhance the level of rule of law in public security supervision and the credibility of law enforcement efforts. Prisons and detention centers do not differentiate individuals serving sentences and under supervision of their nationalities or ethnicities. All are treated impartially and equally, ensuring their personal safety not violated, dignity not insulted, and basic rights are protected.

The right to health is fully guaranteed. All prisons and detention facilities in Xizang have equipped with health clinics, each staffed by no less than 10 licensed healthcare professionals who are on duty 24 hours a day on site. Each person serving sentences have their individual health record, receiving medical examination services on regular basis. Specialized hospital has been set up for those who suffer illness. Individuals in serious conditions are transferred to the hospital for treatment. Experts from public hospitals are invited to the specialized hospital for consultation. All prisons and detentions centers have established cooperative mechanisms with public hospitals. In case of serious illness, the prisoners and detainees will be promptly transferred to the public hospitals for treatment. All medical costs are covered by the State. In case of critical illness, provisional release from prison is handled in a timely manner and in accordance with the law.

The right to food is effectively guaranteed. The State provides full subsistence coverage for prisoners and detainees, ensuring that the three daily meals are clean, hygienic and nutritionally balanced. The procurement of living materials is strictly monitored. Food being purchased will undergo standardized testing. A 72-hour food sample retention system is strictly enforced. During the research, we also learned that prisons and detention centers in Xizang fully respect the customs and dietary habits of ethnic minorities and others of special needs. For instance, "halal stoves" are specifically set up for the Hui people; yak meat, Zanba and butter tea are offered to the Zang people based on their own wishes; meals are also specifically adjusted for the elderly, sick and disabled, as well as for juveniles and females.

The right to education is vigorously guaranteed. Cultural education for persons serving sentences has been incorporated into the national education system, carried out through literacy education, basic cultural education, and the education of traditional Zang culture. The library of XAR has set up library branch in the prison, with a collection of more than 20000 books, of which more than 50% are in local Zang language. Education and learning are carried out not only for the

purpose of rehabilitation, but also for the personal livelihoods of the prisoners and detainees to prepare for their social reintegration, and for the protection of their right to education. The so-called “compulsory political re-education” as stated in the RAND Report does not exist.

The right to meet and communicate is guaranteed in accordance with the law. The prison system strictly implements the provisions of the laws including the Prisons Law of the People’s Republic of China. Persons serving sentences may meet with their relatives and guardians on a monthly basis, make phone calls, and engage in activities such as family meals and prison leave for family visit. Detention centers strictly follow the laws and regulations inscribed in the Lawyers Law of the People’s Republic of China, the Regulations of the People’s Republic of China on Detention Centers, and the Law Enforcement Rules for Detention Centers, among other relevant provisions, to ensure that detainees could meet and communicate with their lawyers. Detention centers at all levels have improved the efficiency of lawyers’ meetings through means including expanding meeting places. Incorporating local conditions, two methods, namely on-site visits and remote visits, are utilized to broaden the channels for meetings. This ensures effective and secure visitation, facilitating the smooth conduct of criminal proceedings.

The right to appeal, denounce and accuse are substantially guaranteed. The Prisons Law of the People’s Republic of China, the Regulations of the People’s Republic of China on Detention Centers and other laws and regulations are strictly implemented, fully safeguarding the rights of persons serving sentences and the persons being detained to lodge complaints, denunciations and accusations, and proactively receiving supervision by procuratorial organs, law-enforcement supervisors and the society. Prisons are equipped with mailboxes for Prison Governors and People’s Procuratorate Office in Prisons. The mails are directly managed by the prison governors and the People’s Procuratorate Office. The People’s Procuratorates have established a tour inspection system in addition to the stationed procuratorates, engaging in roving procuratorates in prisons and detention centers in Xizang. Meanwhile, representatives from the National People’s Congress, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the United Front Work and Civil Religion Committee (UFWCC), and relatives of the prisoners and detainees are employed as law enforcement supervisors. The allegation in the RAND Report that human rights abuses and acts of torture and ill-treatment exist in some prisons and detention centers is nothing but fabrication. No signs of such acts have been identified in Xizang.

In addition, female prisoners and detainees are allocated in separate facilities under the supervision of female prison polices. The occurrence of “rape and sexual abuse” as described in the Report has no basis.

IV. The True Intention behind the Report

The Report exhibits a biased stance, employs unreliable techniques, the described situations do not align with facts, and the conclusions are difficult to substantiate. RAND Europe and its sponsors are clearly aware of this. Then, why do they still painstakingly release such a report? In essence, it reflects the intention of the United States and some Western countries to create new speculation on Xizang-related issues by playing a series of “combined punches”, regaining the heat of the “Xizang issue” and promoting the implementation of the strategy of “using Xizang to control China”.

Since 2021, the RAND Corporation has used “night-time lighting data” to analyze the operation of “detention facilities” in Xinjiang over the past decade, and has issued a series of anti-China

reports related to Xinjiang, such as Explaining the Changes in the Increase and Decrease of Detention Facilities in Various Regions of Xinjiang and Using Night-time Lighting to Investigate the Development of Detention Facilities in Xinjiang, which have attracted the attention of the international community. The release of the Report Analysis of Night-time Lighting in Tibet's (Xizang's) Prisons and Detention Centers and the in-depth comparison between Xinjiang and Xizang in the Report, stating that the "mass detention and imprisonment" carried out in Xizang bears some resemblance to the "re-education and training centers" in Xinjiang in terms of their nature, scale, and purpose, have fully exposed the U.S. and Western countries' attempts to revert to their old tactics of duplicating the means used to fabricate the "Xinjiang issue" in Xizang, and thereby "Xinjiangize" the "Xizang issue", with a view to further promoting the internationalization of the "Xizang issue" by using Xizang as a tool to contain and restrain China.

In recent years, the achievements made in safeguarding human rights in Xizang have been obvious to all, and the people of all ethnic groups in Xizang have the deepest feelings about these outcomes and have the most right to speak about them. "The historic changes that have taken place in just a few decades, spanning thousands of years" are ample proof of the correctness and effectiveness of the CPC's strategy for governing Xizang, which will not be altered by outside clamor.