



Tibet Research Project

An open source investigation into prison & detention facilities in Tibet

This project was conducted with no funding except for the time donated by many skilled open source researchers and OSINT enthusiasts.

tibetresearchproject.org

Key Overview

- This project has established the locations of 85 detention facilities in Tibet and documented their coordinates.
- It has confirmed key information about a number of known locations and has tackled misinformation through open source verification.
- Many facilities have been documented with coordinates for the first time.

Background

The Tibet Research Project started in December 2020 as a personal project for research coordinator Tom Jarvis. The initial project was to locate several detention facilities in Tibet and verify them, however it soon became clear that there were far more locations than previously thought. The project took on its new form as online crowd-sourced research, which allowed for more eyes on the region and multiple layers of verification from many analysts.

Research was conducted using tools such as Google Earth Pro and Satellites Pro as well as deep searches into the Chinese internet to obtain key information, government documents, and clues about the locations and details of detention facilities.

The team consisted of people across the world, including from the USA, Scotland, England, Norway, and Australia. Several researchers opted out of being named in this research due to their location and safety considerations. These members deserve as much credit as those who were named.

The research is now in its late pre-publication phase, where the reports have been released for anyone to scrutinise. This will be followed by an official publication of the results.

Next steps for the Tibet Research Project include expanding the analysis beyond Tibet into regions with large percentages of ethnic Tibetans in their population.

These new findings are believed to be the most complete and contemporary list of Tibetan detention facilities to date. This new list of facilities can provide a framework of locations for human rights researchers to investigate political detention in Tibet.

From what we have observed, detention in Tibet does not match the scale of that in Xinjiang. Despite this, the human rights issues remain prominent. Continuous monitoring of developments and new constructions should be a goal for human rights researchers to ensure that the situation does not escalate to Xinjiang's scale.

Another key observation was that reporting on the issue was severely vulnerable to misinformation. Several verifications led to the conclusion that some generally trusted sources' claims were based on incorrect data or locations.



Prisoners seen in satellite footage at Drapchi Prison, which used to be the only official prison in Tibet.



Analysis of power lines and buildings allowed us to geolocate and verify imagery of Utritru Prison.

