

China steps up resettlement of Tibetan herders

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(Reuters; Xinhua) The Chinese government will move more than 52,000 Tibetan herders and farmers into permanent housing during 2008, Xinhua reports, a practice human rights groups say has been marked by abuses. *"The project to improve their living conditions began in 2006, when the regional government set a target of building homes for 220,000 households"*, Xinhua said, citing local government officials. *"That would mean housing 80 percent of the region's farmers and herders by the end of 2010"*, it added. Beijing says it resettles Tibetans, across all Tibetan areas, not just the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), to help protect the environment and boost living standards. But the resettlements often involve the slaughter of animals belonging to the mostly nomadic herders, relocation to poorly built accommodation and inability to find work due to lack of skills, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in 2007. Others are forcibly evicted to make room for public works projects, like dams and roads, the group said in a report.

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