

China keeping tight grip on Tibet

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The BBC provided a brief survey of the current situation in Tibet. It reported that China appears to be maintaining a tight grip over all Tibetan areas and although the government suggests life in these areas is returning to normal, there is no evidence to support this. Tibetans face travel restrictions, and monks and nuns have been forced to attend re-education classes. Chinese tourists are once again being allowed to visit the region, but few are making the trip, and foreigners are banned. Chinese central and local government officials are saying little and the Tibet Autonomous Region's (TAR) foreign affairs office did not respond to a series of faxed questions from the BBC. David Kramer, US Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, was in Beijing to discuss human rights issues, and directly asked for an update on the latest developments in Tibet. He appeared to get little out of his Chinese counterparts. "*We did not get information on numbers [of people arrested]*", he told journalists. Thubten Samphel, spokesman for the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), said China is restricting the lives of ordinary people. "*At the moment, we are receiving very little information. There are restrictions on telephone calls into Tibet and coming out*", he said. The spokesman, based in Dharamsala, said Beijing officials had also stopped ordinary Tibetans from leaving China for Nepal and India. He added that occasional protests by monks and nuns were continuing - even if they were quickly stopped by Chinese security forces.

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