

## Photo Shows Dramatic Demolition of Yachen Gar Buddhist Complex



A photo of the Yachen Gar Buddhist centre received by RFA on Aug. 27, 2019 (bottom), compared to an undated photo of the complex in Sichuan province before demolition (top)./Image: Radio Free Asia

Rapid demolition at the Yachen Gar Tibetan Buddhist centre in western China's Sichuan province has raised nearly half of the sprawling complex, leaving a vast patch of grass where thousands of nuns and monks once lived and studied, sources in the region told RFA's Tibetan Service.

"Almost half of the entire Yachen Gar complex has been razed since the demolition of the nuns' dwellings began in July," said a source in Tibet.

Demolition of the nuns' dwellings the sprawling centre in Palyul (in Chinese, Baidu) county began on July 19 and moved ahead quickly, with at least 100 structures now torn down, a Tibetan living in the area told Radio Free Asia last month.

The destruction follows the forced removal beginning in May of over 7,000 residents of Yachen Gar, which once housed around 10,000 monks and nuns devoted to scriptural study and meditation.

A short video clip taken on August 11 and sent to Radio Free Asia shows that Chinese

authorities moved quickly with the demolition, leaving only barren ground where the dwellings were levelled.

A photo of Yachen Gar received by Radio Free Asia on Tuesday shows a clear flat site where the 3000 nuns' dwellings once stood.

"The Chinese authorities took days to clear the wreckage of Yachen Gar. Now in its place, they have planted grass, and the ground is covered by green plastic," said a source in exile, who spoke to contacts in Tibet.

"Almost half of the Yachen Gar complex has been destroyed," said the source in Tibet.

"It takes a walk of about 20-30 minutes to cover the entire length of the levelled ground," said the source.

"The Chinese authorities have cordoned off the areas from pedestrians and also to foster the growth of grass," added the source.

"The Chinese authorities still intend to destroy more monks' dwellings in other parts of Yachen Gar. However, due to repeated appeals by senior monks, it is temporarily put on hold," said the source in Tibet.

"A definitive and stern order from high-level authorities would easily break the truce," added the source.

Many of those expelled from Yachen Gar is now being held in detention and subjected to political re-education and beatings, sources told Radio Free Asia in earlier reports.

Chinese officials have meanwhile been stationed at the centre to "maintain a tight watch" over those who remain and to check on all outside visitors, while travel to and from the centre is strictly monitored and restricted, sources say.

Restrictions on Yachen Gar and the better-known Larung Gar complex in Sichuan's Serthar (Seda) county are part of "an unfolding political strategy" aimed at controlling the influence and growth of these important centres for Tibetan Buddhist study and practice, a Tibetan advocacy group said in a March 2017 report.

“[Both centres] have drawn thousands of Chinese practitioners to study Buddhist ethics and receive spiritual teaching since their establishment, and have bridged Tibetan and Chinese communities,” the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet said.

During 2017 and 2018, at least 4,820 Tibetan and Han Chinese monks and nuns were removed from Larung Gar, with over 7,000 dwellings and other structures torn down beginning in 2001, according to sources in the region.

***Reported by Kunsang Tenzin for Radio Free Asia’s Tibetan Service. Translated by Dorjee Damdul. Written in English by Paul Eckert. This report was originally published by [Radio Free Asia](#)***

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