Tibet Post International: Style Guide

Updated Edition: 15 May 2025

1. General Purpose

This style guide ensures all TPI content remains grammatically consistent, professionally formatted, politically independent, and editorially aligned with our core values: the advocacy of democracy, freedom of expression, human rights, and the national independence of Tibet. It also guarantees that no tone, terminology, or structure supports or normalises authoritarian regimes or propaganda—particularly that of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

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2. Writing & Grammar Rules

Numbers

- **Dates**: Use both formats depending on sentence structure (e.g., *April 6* or *6 April 2024*).
  Avoid: today, tomorrow, yesterday, next week, last month.
  Use: specific dates.
- **Numbers**:
  - Spell out one to twelve. Use figures from 13 onwards.
    E.g.: Ten activists protested. 28 participants attended.
  - **Thousands**: Use comma separators. (e.g., 1,000; 10,500)
  - **Millions**: *Six million, 6.5 million, 9,200,000.*
  - **Ages**: *Tsering, aged 19*, or *19-year-old Tsering*, or *Tsering (19)*.
- **Time**: *3pm, 5.30am*. No space before *am/pm*.

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3. Article Formatting

- Use **WordPad** (not MS Word) when preparing articles for Joomla CMS. Word formatting causes incompatibility issues.

- Begin articles with the reporter's **location** (in bold if needed for clarity):
  Dharamshala: — Washington: — Taipei: —

Italics

- Italicise peripheral or non-core text:
  E.g.: For further details, visit www.thetibetpost.com.

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4. People & Titles

General Usage

- Titles: Use **Dr**, **Mr**, **Mrs** (no full stops).
- Do not abbreviate formal titles (e.g., **Professor**, not *Prof.*).
- No full stops in initials: *FW de Klerk*, not *F.W.*
- Use full names on first mention, then surnames as appropriate:
  e.g., Mr Lobsang Tsering and Mr Tashi Tsering both attended.

Specific Usage

- **Kalon Tripa Dr Lobsang Sangay**, not *(Prime Minister)*.
- **His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama** or simply **His Holiness**.
  NEVER "the Dalai Lama" unless quoting.
- **His Holiness the 17th Karmapa Trinley Thaye Dorje** – never just "the Karmapa."

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5. Places

- Towns and cities should always include country/region:
  e.g., Dharamshala, northern India; *Brussels, the Belgian capital*.
- **Use 'Dharamshala'**, not *Dharamsala*.
- Tibetan place names should follow a standard hierarchy (village, county, province, and clarification in brackets if needed):
  - *Dongga, Shigatse, U-Tsang [Chinese: Xigazê Prefecture]*

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6. Tibetan & Political Terminology

Accepted Terminology

- **Kashag** (cabinet of the Tibetan government-in-exile)
- **Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile** (with hyphens)
- **Government-in-exile**
- **Tibetan diaspora**, **Tibetans in exile**

Modern Political Terms (Recommended)

- Occupied Tibet
- Chinese colonial rule
- Tibetan sovereignty
- Self-determination for Tibet
- Forced assimilation
- Cultural genocide
- Peaceful resistance
- Authoritarian censorship
- Pro-democracy movement
- Exile-based governance
- Digital resistance

Avoid Terms (due to pro-China alignment)

- Ethnic minority (in place of Tibetan)
- Tibetan Autonomous Region (use with caveats or brackets)
- “Chinese Tibet”
- Harmonisation (in Chinese state context)
- Splittist (except in quotation marks: ‘splittist’)

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7. Digital and 21st-Century Media Terminology

- **Use**:
    - Online platforms / digital activism
    - Virtual press conferences
    - Multimedia journalism
    - Human rights documentation
    - Citizen journalism
    - Diaspora-based media
    - Encrypted communication apps
    - Data sovereignty
    - Information warfare
    - Disinformation campaigns
    - Algorithmic bias
    - Media blackouts
    - State-controlled narratives

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8. Punctuation and Editorial Conventions

Quotes

- Use **double quote marks** for speech.
- Use **single quote marks** for uncertain, ironic, or state propaganda terminology.
- Punctuation inside quotes unless quoting full sentences.
- Attribute quotes with full names and roles upon first mention.

Headlines

- Capitalise all major words except determiners.
  e.g., "Never Give Up," Says His Holiness the Dalai Lama

- Include “Tibet,” “Tibetans,” or “His Holiness the Dalai Lama” in headlines when possible (for SEO and political emphasis).

Other Punctuation

- Use **hyphens** for:
    - *Tibetan government-in-exile*, *self-immolation*, *three-day protest*
- Do not hyphenate adverbial constructions:
  An overly broad measure (not *overly-broad*)

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9. Grammar and Editorial Style

- Ensure subject–verb agreement and clear sentence structure.
- Use **UK English** as preferred; US/Indian English is accepted if consistent.
- Avoid emotive language in hard news unless quoting.
    - *Harsh crackdown* is better than *brutal crackdown*.
- Always **attribute speech** and provide proper context.

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10. Academic and Political Integrity

Prohibited

- Echoing any CCP talking points.
- Quoting known pro-China analysts without critical context.
- Presenting false equivalencies about Tibetan identity, governance, or sovereignty.

Encouraged

- Citing:
    - Exiled Tibetan leaders
    - International human rights organisations
    - Independent researchers and universities
    - Non-state-backed media or watchdogs

- Featuring:
    - Testimonies of political prisoners
    - Interviews with Tibetan refugees and diaspora voices
    - Analyses of Chinese propaganda methods

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11. Citation & Abbreviation

- Use full name on first mention with abbreviation in brackets.
    - *The Tibetan Women's Association (TWA)...*
- Use abbreviation only after first mention.

Treatment of "One China Policy" in Style Guide

Term: *One China Policy*
Editorial Note:

- Always refer to this **with critical distance**, and **in quotation marks** — *"One China Policy"*.
- It should be followed by **editorial clarification** indicating that this is a **Chinese government-imposed narrative** used to deny Tibet, Taiwan, East Turkestan (Xinjiang), Southern Mongolia, and Hong Kong their **right to self-determination**.
- Do **not** present it as a legitimate or universally accepted principle unless quoting a government or source that explicitly supports it.

Approved Style Examples:

The so-called *"One China Policy"* is frequently invoked by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to assert illegitimate claims over sovereign nations and regions, including the independent nation of Tibet.

While some governments officially acknowledge the *"One China Policy"*, many human rights groups and exile-based Tibetan organisations condemn it as a political doctrine aimed at suppressing freedom and democratic self-governance.

International critics argue that the *"One China Policy"* has enabled China's authoritarian expansionism, including its militarisation of the Indo-Pacific and its erasure of Tibetan national identity.

Unacceptable Usages (to Avoid):

🚫 *Tibet is a part of China under the One China Policy.*
🚫 *According to the One China Policy, regions like Tibet and Taiwan are inseparable from China.*
🚫 *The One China Policy recognises Tibet as an autonomous region within the PRC.*

Additional Points to Add

1. Use of Terms Related to Sovereignty and Self-Determination

- Always prioritise terms such as **"nation of Tibet," "people of Tibet," "Tibetan sovereignty," "right to self-determination,"** and **"national liberation"** over terms like "autonomous region" or "part of China" unless explicitly quoting or clarifying Chinese government claims.
- Avoid normalising or legitimising terms imposed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) that diminish Tibet's independent status.

2. Editorial Framing and Contextualisation

- When mentioning the "One China Policy," **always provide context** about its use as a political tool for suppressing freedoms and justifying human rights abuses in Tibet and other regions.
- Incorporate references to **international law, UN declarations, and human rights principles** when discussing Tibet's status and rights.

3. Language on Experts and Commentators

- Use careful qualifiers when referencing experts, scholars, or diplomats who support or echo Chinese state narratives.
- Terms like **"Chinese government-aligned experts," "CCP-affiliated commentators," "state-backed analysts,"** or **"China's official propagandists"** can be used to clarify potential bias.

4. Caution Against Euphemistic or Neutral Language

- Avoid euphemisms like **"Chinese sovereignty over Tibet"** without editorial qualification, as this can implicitly endorse the CCP's position.
- Instead, prefer terms like **"illegal occupation," "colonisation," "repressive control,"** or **"political subjugation"** when factually supported.

5. Encouraging Use of Tibetan Voices

- Prioritise the voices of Tibetans in exile, Tibetan scholars, activists, and diaspora communities in framing stories about Tibet's political status and the impacts of the "One China Policy."

Confidentiality and Privacy Policy

1. Protecting Sources and Informants

- Always prioritise the **confidentiality and anonymity of sources**, especially when dealing with sensitive political, human rights, or security-related information.
- Do not reveal any identifying details of whistleblowers, activists, or interviewees without their explicit informed consent.

2. Handling Sensitive Information

- Treat all unpublished information, documents, and communications as **strictly confidential**.
- Share sensitive materials only with authorised personnel directly involved in the reporting or editorial process.

3. Data Protection and Privacy

- Ensure compliance with applicable **data protection laws and ethical standards** when collecting, storing, and publishing personal data.
- Avoid publishing unnecessary personal details that could put individuals at risk or violate their privacy.

4. Respecting Privacy in Reporting

- Balance the public interest against individual privacy rights when reporting on personal matters.
- Avoid sensationalism or intrusive coverage that could harm individuals or communities.

5. Digital Security Measures

- Adopt secure communication tools and encrypted channels where possible for interactions with sources, especially in repressive environments.
- Maintain cybersecurity best practices to protect data integrity and confidentiality.

Referencing Style Guide

Preferred System:
Australian Western Sydney University Harvard Style is recommended for all analytical reports, opinion pieces, editorials, and long-form investigative articles. This

style is professional, widely respected, and suitable for international academic and journalistic contexts.

In-Text Citation Guidelines

- Use **author-date format**:
  (Smith, 2022) or *(Smith & Lee, 2023, p. 45)*
- For multiple citations:
  (Wong, 2019; Rinchen, 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2021)
- Always include page numbers when quoting directly.

Reference List Format

Include a **full reference list at the end** of each article (if academic in tone), or an internal citation summary (if for internal editorial use). Use the following formats:

Books
Author(s) Year, *Title*, Publisher, Place of publication.

Goldstein, M.C. 1997, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon: China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Journal Articles
Author(s) Year, 'Title of article', *Title of Journal*, vol. xx, no. xx, pp. xxx–xxx.

Barnett, R. 2008, 'Authenticity and the Dalai Lama: A Contemporary Reading', *Critical Asian Studies*, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 369–388.

Online Articles/Reports
Author(s)/Organisation Year, *Title*, Publisher or Website, viewed Day Month Year, <URL>.

Amnesty International 2021, *Tibet: Human Rights under Siege*, viewed 14 May 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/reports/2021/12/tibet/.

News Articles
Author Year, 'Title of Article', *Title of News Outlet*, Day Month Year, viewed Day Month Year, <URL>.

Smith, J. 2023, 'Tibetan Monks Defy Crackdowns', *The Guardian*, 8 June 2023, viewed 15 May 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/world/tibet-rights.

Interviews
Name of interviewee Year, interview by Interviewer's Name, Interview format, Place, Day Month Year.

Tsering, D. 2024, interview by Y. Choesang, audio interview, Dharamshala, 3 March 2024.

Important Notes

- Use **italics** for book and journal titles.
- For **organisational authors** (e.g. Human Rights Watch), spell out full names.
- URLs should be **hyperlinked** (in digital formats) and updated regularly.
- Always **verify source credibility**, especially in politically sensitive topics—avoid references that reproduce Chinese state propaganda or unreliable state-controlled sources (e.g. Xinhua, Global Times, CGTN), unless being critically analysed.

Note:
The Style Guide was first introduced in 2008, further developed in 2016, and last updated in 2025 by different editorial teams during their respective terms. It will remain in effect until the next official revision.