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HUMAN RIGHTS

update

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Arrest of Tibetan monks for postings calling for freedom in Tibet

Four Tibetan monks from Labrang Tashikyil Monastery in Sangchu County, Ganan Tibet Autonomous Prefecture ("TAP"), Gansu Province, have been arrested by Chinese Public Security Bureau (PSB) officers on 23 May 2005, according to confirmed information received by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD). Jamyang Dhondup, Dhargay Gyatso and two other unidentified monks were arrested on suspicion of pasting bills calling for "freedom in Tibet".

On 22 May 2005, numerous bills that called for freedom in Tibet were found pasted on the walls of Labrang Tashikyil Monastery and its surrounding areas. Following the incident, PSB officers from Sangchu County after rigorous investigation arrested the monks from their

monastery on the ground of suspicion. Their whereabouts is currently unknown after they were led away by the PSB officers from the monastery.

Dhargay Gyatso, 25, was born in Arig Village, and admitted to Labrang Tashikyil Monastery at an early age. He traveled to India in 1996 and studied Buddhist scriptures for six years in a south India Tibetan monastery. In 2003, he returned to Tibet. While Jamyang Tharchin, 23, hails from Malho County, detail information on the other two monks is not available as yet.

In another case, Chung Tsering, a monk at Pangsa Monastery was arrested in April 2005 on suspicion of pasting pro-independence bills on the gate of Tashi Gang Township

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A minor, Tenzin Gelek, shows his amputated feet at the Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre in Dharamsala, India

Tibetan children risking live in quest of education in exile

Numerous Tibetans fleeing their homeland trek through the treacherous Himalaya to come into exile. Starvation, death in crevasse, frostbite and arrest by the border security patrol are the risks that the Tibetans undertake during their journey to freedom in exile. Children who account for almost half of the total exodus are especially prone to the hazards that lie on the path to freedom.

The children come into exile seeking education in the network of schools setup in India by the Dalai

Lama and the Tibetan-Government-in-Exile. The schools provide broad based modern education along with Tibetan cultural education. Shortage of schools in Tibet, especially in rural areas which encompasses most of Tibet's land lead to the exodus of children. While in some rural areas where there are government schools, the quality of education, lack of facilities and opportunities in the future make the parents to trust strangers and guides to send their children to India for education.

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A Tibetan boy's feet amputated due to frostbite while escaping through the Himalaya

In February 2005, a Tibetan boy, Tenzin Gelek, 13 years old, arrived at the Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre (TRRC) in Kathmandu, Nepal. Tenzin's feet were frostbitten after days walking through the snow. In order to prevent fatal infections, doctors had to amputate his feet.

Tenzin's family lives in Zallo Village, Meldrogungkar County, Lhasa, "TAR". He is the youngest in his family with five children. After studying at a school in Tibet for several years, his father sent him to pursue further education in a Tibetan school in exile. Tenzin recounts to TCHRD, "We were farmers and my father and the elder brothers work in the family field to sustain the family. My elder sister attends a local school and I also attended Jarado primary school for five years. My school was far away and I walk for an hour and half every day to reach the school. Since there weren't many opportunities in Tibet and most youngsters get spoilt, my father decided that I should go to a good Tibetan school in exile."

"My father said that he has great hope in me and told me to study hard in India. He found a guide and paid him 2000 Yuan to take me beyond the Himalaya to Nepal. There were twenty seven people in our group. Seven of us were children and the youngest was ten years old. Initially we boarded a goods carriage vehicle and drove for two days from Lhasa. We then walked for nine days through the snow mountains. My shoes worn out in the middle of the journey and I continued to walk in my worn out shoes for I didn't had a spare. When we reached Samdo (Nepal border area), the children couldn't walk any further out of exhaustion. My feet

especially had become numb with frostbite and infection."

"Considering the children in the group, the elders took a break for four days. However, we didn't have enough to eat and my condition was getting worse. Due to the infection, I had very high fever. The elders took turn to carry me on their back and managed to reach the TRRC in Kathmandu, Nepal, in February 2005. By the time I reached the TRRC, almost a month has passed since I left my home.

"Upon reaching the TRRC, I was given treatment in the clinic and consulted to a bigger hospital. The doctor diagnosed the infection to be fatal if my feet are not amputated immediately. So accordingly my feet were amputated and it has now healed completely."

After about four months rest at the TRRC, Nepal, Tenzin Gelek arrived in Dharamsala, India, in June 2005. He wishes to join a school and fulfill his father's dreams.

High school fees makes a poor farmer's son come into exile for education

Choedak, a 17 year old boy from Hrimo Village, Toedgya Township, Chentsa County in Qinghai Province, arrived in the TRRC, Nepal. He told TCHRD, "I belong to a poor farming family. We are seven in the family with five children. I am the oldest and there are two boys and two girls younger to me. Being the oldest, my parents send me to the school but they couldn't afford to send my younger siblings to school. When I was eight years old, I attended Lhaden Primary School, a local village school. There were about 120 students and 13 teachers at the school. Chinese and Tibetan languages, Mathematics, Geography were taught in the school. Apart from two periods in a week to teach three subjects, the entire school schedule is dedicated to teaching Chinese

language."

"For a season, we have to pay 35 Yuan excluding the food, stationary, uniforms and other miscellaneous expenditure. The school classroom is in very bad condition. The classroom door, window, blackboard, chair, desk, basically everything is either broken or about to break. During the winter, it's especially cold when it snows. Since there is nothing to heat up the room coupled with the broken windows, the students shiver in the classroom. Whereas the teachers have iron fireplaces to keep themselves warm. The students are required to bring woods while coming to school."

"Upon passing the primary school, I went on to attend the Nationalities Middle School in Chentsa County. However, my parents pulled me out of the school after a year in the middle school. They couldn't afford my schooling anymore. Being a boarding school, the school charges 365 Yuan per semester. Although the meals are provided by the school but at the end of the year, a student has to repay in either kind or cash. Each student is required to bring in 200 Gyama (1 Gyama equals to half kilogram) of grain to the school or pay 120 Yuan. Despite that the food in the school is very terrible. The rice porridge in the morning is filled with rat excreta and the other meals in the day are no better. When the students demanded for better food to the school authority, the demand was dismissed and the Principal instead rebuked the students. Similarly, the other facilities in the school were also bad. For eight student dormitories, there is only one lavatory. To make the matter worse, there is shortage of water in the school and the students hardly take baths or wash themselves when they get dirty. Sometimes the students walk for about a mile to fetch water."

"Apart from the semester fee and the food repay in kind or cash, there are many other miscellaneous money collections in the school like

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Posting bills calling for “Independence for Tibet” lands monk in prison for eight years

Choenga Tsering, 21 years old, hails from Ser-ngok Village, Kardze County, Kardze Tibet Autonomous Prefecture (“TAP”), Sichuan. Owing to his pro-independence activities in 2002, he was sentenced to a eight year term.

Early in childhood, Tsering was admitted to the local monastery by his parents to study Buddhist scriptures and grammar under his maternal uncle.

He studied hard for years for his scholarship and stood a good chance in excelling the Buddhist sacred text under the guidance of his uncle.

However, Tsering’s scholarship suffered when he undertook peaceful pro-independence activities as a result of which Chinese Public Security Bureau (PSB) arrested him. In 2002, on several occasions he secretly pasted bills calling for “Independence for Tibet”, and urged the Tibetan people to boycott the Chinese leadership. The bills

were posted on the walls of the county and village markets as well as on the signs of government administrative buildings.

Following investigations on the postings, the PSB officers arrested Tsering from his monastery. He was led straight to the PSB office where the officers beat him regularly during interrogations. The officers demanded to know the objectives in writing the bills, the person(s) helping him and the leader if he was part of a group. Each time Tsering acknowledged himself to be the sole responsible, he was booted and hit indicating bad attitude and non cooperation with the PSB officers.

The PSB reported Tsering to be anti-government and accordingly Kardze People’s Intermediate Court charged Tsering of “endangering state security” and sentenced him to eight years imprisonment term. He was taken to Kardze Mok Prison to serve the term.

While in prison, Tsering’s mother had a prolonged illness due to the severe setbacks on her son and later died . Choenga Tsering will be released in 2009 upon completion of his eight-year term. ♦

contribution for painting the school boards black etc. The school officials planned to make a volleyball court in the school. The students were formed in groups of six and told to bring a jeep of sand for the court. We paid 60 Yuan for a jeep to carry the sand to the school."

"For a poor farmer's son like me, it is beyond means to continue schooling in Tibet. To make the matter worse, a team of government officials on a random visit to our village imposed a fine of 5000 Yuan on my parents for having two more children than the government's limit of three in a family in the rural areas. A machine in our house to make ropes was confiscated when my parents failed to pay the fine. Our family's very existence was questionable, hence my parents pulled me out of the school and send me to India to continue study in a school run by His Holiness the Dalai and the Tibetan-Government-in-Exile."

Due to such a reality despite the Chinese government's claim of building schools and implementing compulsory free fundamental education in Tibet, children in rural areas do not go to schools or drop after a few years even if they attend one due to the high cost of schooling. The government's claim of compulsory free education becomes a myth in front of numerous cases like Choedak and Gelek that TCHRD has documented over the years. ♦

Fight over medicinal plant leaves two dead and 15 injured

Grassland politics have greatly affected the lives of rural Tibetans. Taxes collected by the authorities are not used for the development of the local area. In the absence of any tangible improvement in their lives, Tibetans suspect the money and produce goes into the pockets of local officials. The government's incompetent policies over resources exacerbate tension amongst Tibetans or with the Chinese traders from mainland China.

A Tibetan who wishes to remain anonymous described a severe fight over plucking of *Yartsa Gunbu*, a medicinal plant (Botanical name: *Codyceps Sinensis*), in Dzatoe County, Jyekundo Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai, which led to the death of two Tibetans and 15 people receiving severe injuries.

The man told TCHRD, "on 20 May 2005, a severe fight broke out between the residents of Dzatoe County and the neighbouring Nangchen County over plucking of *Yartsa Gunbu* plant. The residents of Zatoed County restricted plucking of the plant that grew in its area by outside people. Since the livelihood of the residents of the county were at stake if outsiders who come in thousands to exploit the resource, the residents made an appeal to the County authorities to intervene and restrict others from plucking the plant in their area."

"Thousands of people including residents of Nangchen County, ethnic Chinese and Chinese muslims from neighbouring provinces come to Dzatoe County to pluck the plant. This causes severe setbacks on the livelihood on the local residents. The county authorities have not brought any development in the area from the tax collected from the outside people thereby forcing the Tibetans to appeal the authorities in not allowing

outsiders to benefit from the local resources. There has been a steady increase in the number of outsiders to pluck the plant and every outsider, approximately ten thousand, is required to pay a tax of 1500 Yuan to the county authorities for a seasonal visit. The corrupt officials in the county government pocket the money and does not bring any improvement in the area."

"The authorities didn't heed the appeal of the people and in the end of May this year, a severe fight broke out between the Tibetans of Nangchen County and Dzatoe County. The authorities stayed ignorant of the fight and did not interfere in the beginning. It was only after the fight became severe leading to the death of two people and injury to many others, a team of Qinghai Province People's Armed Police and Public Security Bureau arrived at the spot and rounded the area where the plant grows thereby restricting anyone from going into the area. At the time I left my native town, the matter was not solved."

The interviewee opines that the fight took place due to the ineffectiveness of the local authorities in implementing the law, Tibetans being uneducated and corruption at the county administrative government. ♦

Testimony of a Tibetan Demonstrator

Continued from page 1

Anu, 36, hails from Lhasa City, "TAR". Early in his childhood, he attended a millitary school and thereafter got a job in the millitary automotive workshop. He quit his job after taking part in the demonstrations in Lhasa in 1989. Years later, he got a job as a teacher in a school, however, Anu had to leave Tibet fearing imminent arrest.

Anu told TCHRD, "In 1989, when peaceful demonstrations broke out in Lhasa, I slipped out from my workplace and joined the demonstration. During the demonstration, we chanted slogans calling for "Freedom in Tibet" and "Chinese to go back". The Chinese military personals shot dead some of the demonstrators right in front of my eyes. It was a very disturbing sight. Hence, I joined the demonstration on the second day also. On the following day, I met a westerner who asked me to show him the dead bodies and also those injured during the demonstration. Accompanied by a friend, I showed the westerner a dead demonstrator. After taking photographs of the dead body, I requested the westerner to disseminate the information to the international community. While we were returning from the spot, a group of Tibetans on the way ran away hysterically. Unable to understand what was happening, two civil clothed police officers suddenly grapped me and took me to the Lhasa City Public Security Bureau (PSB). The police officers beat me severely through out the day and cuffed me from behind and led to Gutsa Detention Centre in the night. Since I was affiliated to the military, I was handed over to the military authorities after a week's detention at Gutsa."

"The millitary authorities locked me in the detention cell for two months. While in detention, the officers gave me propaganda literatures to study and there were daily lectures on loyalty to the state. I was released after two months, comparatively short detention since my parents had served the government for many years. However, the authorities demanded a public apology from me for bringing bad

name to the military. Accordingly a meeting of all the staff was called and I was told to do self-criticism and apologize to all the staff. I didn't follow the directives whole heartedly which made the authorities furious and I was sent for 15 more days in detention with more lectures and propaganda literatures to study. After release, I was constantly monitored in the office. My parents were also watched upon. I left my workplace unable to stand the surveillance."

"In 2001, I got a job as a Chinese language teacher in a private school called Jhomolangma School in Lhasa. I taught the tenth and the eleventh grade students of the school. In October 2004, the government authorities issued a directive to conduct "patriotic education" classes in the schools in Lhasa. The head of the school told me take the classes on "patriotic education" and handed me a booklet from the government as a guide. The booklet contained chapters on "criticizing the Dalai separatist clique" etc. I immediately requested the head to relieve me of the task and to depute another teacher to conduct the classes. The head of the school, however, said that I should take the classes since I was the class teacher. He further told me to conduct test on the students regarding the "patriotic education". With no options left, I took the booklet and headed to my class."

"While in the class, instead of preaching patriotism to the state, I began to tell the students about my experience in detention in the late 1980s and the torture inflicted on Tibetan prisoners in prisons. The students upon return to their home in the evening had told their families about the lecture. My friends informed that the PSB officers were looking for me and the following day, I fled to Shigatse where I stayed at a friend's house undercover for a few months. On 19 February 2005, I began my journey into exile leaving my wife and children behind." ♦

Administration Office in Meldrogungkar County in "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR"). He is currently known to be detained at Lhasa City PSB Detention Centre.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the "TAR". Massive preparations are underway for commemorating the event in September 2005. As a prohibitive measure to restrict any political activism during the anniversary, strict measures have been applied in Lhasa City and its neighbouring counties. Tibetans who fall under suspicion of engaging in political activism and former political prisoners are rounded up either for detention or interrogations. Their families have been told to accept responsibility to ensure that they do not engage in political activities during the time. In some cases, former political prisoners have been ordered to leave Lhasa as a precautionary measure so that a smooth celebration of the 40th anniversary can take place.

On 8 July 2005, the Tibet daily reported on a report released by the "TAR" Procuracy that details the achievements in the 49 years of its existence. An extract in the report entitled (roughly translated as) *Landmarks in 49 years of glittering existence*, stated, "The Procuracy has struck down on the Dalai clique, separatist forces based inside and outside (Tibet), Falun Gong practitioners and religious figures engaging in activities endangering state security. It has also taken active participation in assisting the TAR government in securing the border and curbing illegal travelers. Since 2001, the Procuracy has prepared 66 cases of endangering state security and arrest order for 82 people. 78 people out of 63 cases have appealed to courts after investigations." ♦

TCHRD commemorates UN international day in support of victims of torture

25 June 2005 marks the ninth year since the United Nations proclaimed the day as the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

Though many countries in the world abide by the UN Convention against Torture (CAT) to accomplish human rights, peace, freedom, democracy and equality, there are still countries that continue to abuse its citizens physically and mentally. In Tibet, such a practice is prevalent although the People's Republic of China (PRC) ratified the CAT in 1988. Tibetans exercising fundamental rights like staging peaceful protest and peacefully expressing their political ideologies are viewed as threat to the State. The peaceful political activities undertaken by Tibetans are labeled "separatist movements" and "endangering the State security". Under such acts, Tibetans are subjected to arbitrary arrest, illegal detention, involuntary disappearance, torture during interrogations and heavy sentences due to arbitrary judicial processes.

Tibetan prisoners in the Chinese administered prisons are met with various torture tactics like electric baton shock, getting hit by iron rod, kick, punch, cuffing hands, feet manacled, imprisonment in solitary confinement cells for long durations, denial of medication and food, exposure to extreme temperature, forced labour, verbal abuse, exercise drills etc.

As a direct result of torture, Yeshe Gyatso, a Tibetan political prisoner died on 15 January 2005. In February 2004, Tsemonling Dawa died in Lhasa after being released from prison in near-death condition due to torture. Rigzin Wangyal who was imprisoned in Pawo Tramo Prison died in the end of December 2004 due to constant torture in prison over the years. Bangri Rinpoche serving

life imprisonment term in Drapchi Prison is known to be in grave health conditions due to inhumane torture in the prison.

Since 1987, TCHRD has documented death of 88 known political prisoners due to torture in Chinese administered prisons in Tibet. There are currently 145 known Tibetan political prisoners imprisoned in a network of prisons, detention centres and re-education through labour facilities. They are imprisoned for peacefully exercising their fundamental rights. According to TCHRD research, almost all of the Tibetan political prisoners have suffered torture while in prison. In many cases, prisoners are released in near-death conditions to shun responsibility by the prison authorities whereas some are released handicapped from prison.

On the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, TCHRD calls upon the PRC to release all political prisoners in Tibet and to end all forms of torture and maltreatment of prisoners. The Centre demands China to adhere to its domestic laws as well as its obligations with regard to UN treaties particularly the CAT.

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Rinzin Wangyal died in prison due to torture in February 2005



Bangri Rinpoche is known to be in grave health condition due to torture in Drapchi Prison



Tsemonling Dawa died after being released from prison in near-death condition



TCHRD ACTIVITIES

Bulletin

Changes in TCHRD Board of Directors

Mr. Lobsang Nyandak, Kalon (Minister) of the Finance Department and Department of Information and International Relations of the Tibetan-Government-in-Exile (TGIE), resigned as the Vice-chairman of the TCHRD board of directors (Bod). As per Mr. Lobsang's vision to make TCHRD a complete non governmental organisation (ngo), he had earlier submitted his resignation from the post of Vice-chairmanship in March 2005. On 24 May 2005, Mr. Lobsang Nyandak formally resigned from the Bod.

Mr. Lobsang Nyandak was the first Executive Director at TCHRD when the Centre was newly established in 1996. Under his excellent leadership and vision, TCHRD prospered to become the first Tibetan ngo focused entirely on human rights of the Tibetan people.

Owing to his excellent leadership qualities, Mr. Lobsang Nyandak was appointed as a Kalon in the TGIE in September 2001.

TCHRD pays its tribute to Mr. Lobsang for guiding the Centre to its current status and reputation. The Bod and the staff of the Centre wish him a very healthy life and success in all the endeavors that he undertakes.

During the Bod meeting on 24 May 2005, the members of the Bod unanimously appointed Mr. Lodar, former Chief Justice of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission as the Vice-chairman of TCHRD Bod.

In another welcome inclusion, Mr. Tempa Tsering, former Minister of DIIR, has accepted to be a member of the Bod. Under his vision, TCHRD came into existence as a ngo focused on the human rights of the Tibetan people. Among many positions that Mr. Tempa Tsering had held,

he was also the former Secretary of the DIIR and Vice-chairman of TCHRD Bod before his resignation from the post in 2003.

The staff of TCHRD welcomes the new Bod members and look forward to their guidance.

TCHRD organises public talk on democracy in exile

TCHRD organized a talk titled "Can there be democracy in exile" at the Environment Education Centre hall of the Tibetan Welfare Office in upper Dharamsala on 5 June 2005.

Dr. Lobsang Sangay, an expert in legal issues, addressed the audience who came in hundreds from all walks of life. Dr. Sangay spoke on the issues challenging democracy in exile. "The challenge of democracy in exile is that exile demands unity whereas free speech and opposing ideas is what democracy is all about", said Dr. Sangay. He also spoke on the democratic developments in the exile Tibetan community with emphasis on the landmark events in Tibetan democracy.

The floor was later opened to the audience and there was active discussion between the audience and the resource person. ♦



Briefings and talks by TCHRD staff

• On 3 June 2005, Mr. Tenzin Norgay, Field Officer, delivered a talk on "Human Rights and the Political Prisoners of Tibet" to a group of college students from U.S.A.. The students on educational visit to Dharamsala lived at the College Higher Tibetan Studies located at Sahra, Dharamsala.

Mr. Norgay spoke in length on the human rights situation in Tibet with particular emphasis on the conditions of political prisoners in Tibet. After the talk, the students asked many pertinent questions regarding political rights in Tibet and the case of Tibet in relation to international law.

• Ms. Norzin Dolma, Senior Programme Officer, Mr. Jampa Monlam and Mr. Tashi Choephel, Researchers at TCHRD, addressed a group of American law students at the Chonor House in Upper Dharamsala on 18 June 2005.

The students on the education program comprised of students from various colleges in the United States.

Ms. Dolma introduced TCHRD to the students and Mr. Monlam and Mr. Choephel spoke on the human rights situation in Tibet. Mr. Monlam also shared with the students his experience of staging protest in Tibet and as a prisoner in Drapchi Prison, Lhasa, for five years.

• On 23 June 2005, Ms. Dolma, spoke on the human rights situation in Tibet during an orientation programme for the Tibetan fullbright candidates. She later fielded questions from the candidates. ♦