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HUMAN RIGHTS

update

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China launches summer 2005 "Strike Hard" Campaign

The People's Republic of China commemorates the 40th anniversary of the founding of the so-called "Tibet Autonomous Region" ('TAR') on 1 September 2005. As a precautionary measure for smooth celebrations, "Strike Hard" (Ch: *Yanda*) campaign for summer 2005 was launched on 22 July 2005.

The current campaign called for by the security committee for the 'TAR' foundation anniversary and by the 'TAR' overall development department, aims to curb political activism mainly in Lhasa and also other areas in the 'TAR'. Former Tibetan political prisoners and Tibetans suspected of political activity form the primary target of the campaign. Criminal prisoners will also be monitored during the campaign.

Quoting a report by the Tibet Daily newspaper, China Tibet Information Centre (www.tibetinfor.com) on 22 July 2005 stated that "the security committee for the anniversary of the 'TAR' foundation and 'TAR' overall development department have called for the launch of a summer 2005 strike hard campaign beginning from 22 July 2005 in the whole of 'TAR' in order to achieve great success in celebrating the 40th anniversary of the 'TAR'.

In 2004, the government of the PRC declared a grand commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the 'TAR'. Former political prisoners and Tibetans suspicious of political activities have become the primary target to crack down upon, and they have been arbitrarily detained or

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"Love your religion, love your country" political campaign in Sera monastery

Since 1996 authorities in Tibet have been implementing the "love your country, love your religion" campaign in the monastic institutions of Tibet. The monastic order has suffered immensely due to the campaign and on many occasions, monks and nuns were arrested or expelled from their monastic institutions on grounds of non-compliance with the campaign. The forcible implementation of the campaign in garnering loyalty to the state is in direct contravention of many international human rights provisions.

On 10 July 2005, officials from the Lhasa Religious Bureau began the campaign in Sera Monastery, one of the three great monasteries in Lhasa. The monastic studies of the monks have been hampered by the current campaign. Many monks are said to have returned to their native hometown when the notice for the conduct of the campaign reached the monastery. The monks in the monastery were grouped into two and issued six different books to study. The officials conduct four sessions per week, putting questions to monks at random regarding the texts. The

current campaign will last for three months, at end of which an examination will be conducted to test the monks' allegiance to the state.

A few days prior to the birthday of the Dalai Lama on 6 July 2005, PSB officers were placed at the monastery main gate to maintain 24-hour surveillance to monitor the monks for any political activities. On 6 July, no one was allowed outside the monastery. Even the monks who had been previously registered to perform prayers in private homes were not allowed to leave the monastery grounds.

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China launches summer 2005 "Strike Hard" Campaign

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interrogated.

In early July 2005, reports of intensification of surveillance on former Tibetan political prisoners reached the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD). The Centre was informed that Tibetans who fall under suspicion of engaging in political activism, in addition former political prisoners, are rounded up either for detention or interrogation. In some cases, they were reportedly ordered to leave Lhasa for the duration of the month, whilst in other cases, their families were ordered to take responsibility for , preventing them from engaging in any political activities. The already difficult life of the former political prisoners has become even more miserable with round-the-clock surveillance and restrictions on their movement.

In 1995, weeks before the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the 'TAR', Tibetan prisoners like Rinzin Wangyal and Sholpa Dawa were arbitrarily detained and put under interrogation.

China's *Strike Hard* (Ch: *Yanda*) Campaign is in grave contravention of international human rights instruments. During the campaign, the state law enforcement agencies are given extraordinary power to arbitrarily arrest, detain, interrogate, ransack houses and issue illegal threats and warnings to people under suspicion. The campaign's nature in dealing with issues by striking hard, fast, and severely leaves many fundamental human rights violated.

In recent years, PRC has implemented campaigns to achieve social order that are not in accordance with the international legal standards. In November 2004, a strike hard campaign for the winter was carried out. With the current

strike hard campaign for the summer, pressure and restrictions are said to have mounted on the Tibetans.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) expresses its grave concern over the welfare of the former political prisoners and Tibetans engaging in peaceful political activities. The Centre condemns the current campaign and urges the PRC leadership to repeal the campaign. ♦

"Love your religion, love your country" political campaign in Sera monastery

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According to Lhasa Evening on 1 November 2004, a weeklong workshop for officials in charge of "patriotic education" in monasteries and nunneries in Lhasa formally opened on 31 October 2004. Lhasa City Party Deputy Secretary, Lhasa National People's Congress President, the head of the Committee for Patriotic Education in Lhasa City, members of the Lhasa Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, officials from the United Work Front Department, officials of the Religious Bureau, and the head of Patriotic Education in "TAR", all attended the opening ceremony. Lobsang Gyurmey, head of the Committee for Patriotic Education in Lhasa, in his opening speech, said, "Patriotic Education should be implemented to the fullest in the monasteries and nunneries to prevent separatist activities. Precautionary measures should also be taken to stop the infiltration of literature from the splittist group based in exile." [Referring to Dharamsala - temporary headquarters of the Dalai Lama]

There are about 700 registered monks from the 'TAR' in Sera Monastery and 300 unregistered monks from other provinces such as Qinghai, Sichuan. ♦

Six Tibetans arrested for pro-independence postings

According to reliable information received by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), six Tibetans were arrested in May 2005 for pasting pro-independence posters in public areas.

The Tibetans: three monks and three nuns, were reportedly arrested on 14 May 2005 by the local Public Security Bureau following massive investigations regarding pro-independence posters pasted on walls in Sangchu County, Luchu County, Machu County and other prominent areas in Gansu Province.

The names of the arrestees are as follows:

- Yonten Dolma (lay name: Dukar Kyi), F, 22, affiliated to Gendun Tengeyling Nunnery
- Tamdin Tsomo, F, 23, affiliated to Gendun Tengeyling Nunnery
- Choekyi Dolma, F, 23, affiliated to Gendun Tengeyling Nunnery
- Dargay Gyatso, M, 25, affiliated to Tsang Monastery
- Jampa Samdup, M, 27, affiliated to Ladrang Tashikyil Monastery
- Lobsang, M, 25, affiliated to Ladrang Tashikyil Monastery

In the wake of photocopied posters calling for Tibetan independence were found to be pasted in many counties in Gansu Province. During the investigations, PSB officials searched through every shop with a photocopy machine in locating the "culprits". On a tip off from a shop keeper, the officials arrested the nuns first and then the monks.

Yonten Dolma and Choekyi Dolma are currently detained in Ganan 'TAP' Detention Centre. The whereabouts of the others is unknown. ♦

This is a regular section profiling political prisoners currently imprisoned in Tibet

Seven years term for pasting pro-independence posters

Sonam Ngodup, 29 years old, comes from Senge Chu, Kardze County, Kardze "Tibet Autonomous Prefecture" ('TAP'), Sichuan Province. Sonam is a monk at Kardze Monastery.

Early in childhood, he was sent to a village Primary School. However, his parents pulled him out of the school since he was not learning much - apart from being able to read some Tibetan - in a school that lacked teachers and facilities. Instead Sonam helped in the family farm, herding livestock among other duties.

Sonam wished to become a monk and in 1990 he was admitted in Kardze Monastery. He was very studious in studying the religious scripts and Buddhist philosophy.

Kardze Monastery, located in Kardze County, is a renowned monastery in Kardze 'TAP'. There are around 500 monks in the monastery. In recent years, many pro-independence activities were initiated in the monastery and many monks

from the monastery are serving imprisonment terms for their activities.

In 2001, after spending six years in the monastery, he started to engage in political activities. He pasted pro-independence posters in Kardze County and other prominent places. Following massive investigations by the local Public Security Bureau (PSB), Sonam was arrested from the monastery. During his detention in the PSB Detention Centre, the officials employed torture to extract confessions from him and also to find out about his other aides.

At the end of 2001, Kardze People's Intermediate Court sentenced him to seven years' imprisonment term on charges of "inciting masses through anti-government propaganda" and "endangering State security".

In 2002, he was transferred to Mok Prison in Ngaba Prefecture. Due to constant beatings and torture, Sonam is

said to be in condition of grave health. On several occasions he has become unconscious and collapsed on the ground. He lost his front teeth during a bad collapse facing the ground. Due to denial of treatment in the prison, he is currently known to be in grave health.

If his prison term is not extended, Sonam Ngodup will be released in 2007 upon completion of his seven years' imprisonment term. ♦

Tibetans arrested at the Nepal-Tibet border serve imprisonment terms for possessing “incriminating” materials

Literature of teachings by the Dalai Lama and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights lead to imprisonment for exile returnees

Three monks who returned to Tibet in 2001 after spending several years studying Buddhism in a Tibetan monastery in South India landed in jail for carrying “incriminating” literatures. Jigme Gyatso (lay name: Kelsang Jigme), 26, served a two years term whereas Lungtok, (layname: Tsedor,), 32, and Tenam served a four years imprisonment term. All of them have been released after serving their respective prison terms. Jigme and Lungtok are brothers and come from Bama Village, Nyima Township, Machu County, Gansu Province, whereas Tenam belongs to Chamdo County, Chamdo Prefecture, ‘TAR’.

Jigme Gyatso fled Tibet for the second time and reached the Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal, in July 2005. He recounts, “I became a monk at 12 years of age. My elder brother, Lungtok, and I were in the same monastery, Bheshing Monastery. After spending seven years in the monastery, Lungtok and I came to India in 1997 to study Buddhist scriptures in Drepung monastery in South India. After studying for four years in the monastery, my mother and grand mother repeatedly asked us to visit them before they die. So we went to Nepal and reached Dram (Nepal-Tibet border town) on 30 June 2001. The family members arranged

a travel permit paper so that we did not face problems in reaching our home. At Dram, we met Tenam who belongs to Chamdo County, and we started our journey together. Along with two other Tibetans, we rented a jeep to take us to Shigatse. When we were quite near to Shigatse, the jeep stopped at a petrol pump station for refill. A Chinese policeman came up to us but did not ask any questions as we showed him our travel permit.”

“After resuming the journey for about fifteen minutes, two police vehicles sped from behind and stopped in front of our jeep. Five policemen in uniform carrying guns took the three of us out and cuffed us from behind. The police then began to search our luggage. The policemen discovered pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama hidden in a soap case. There were 30 of those which could be worn around the neck. Upon searching through my brother’s luggage, the police found two copies of speeches by His Holiness. They further found audio cassettes and two more copies of teachings by His Holiness that he received during a teaching in Dharamsala, North India. In Tenam’s luggage, the police found booklets of teachings by His Holiness and Tibetan language translation copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

“For three days without any food, the three of us were interrogated and beaten severely. The police demanded to know who had told us to carry the books and the aims in carrying it into Tibet. When we replied that we had brought it on our own for reading purposes, they slapped and booted us. After three days, we were led to Lhasa and thrown into the Public Security Bureau (PSB) Detention Centre. We were separated into

different cells and interrogations followed for the next 16 days. Three times a day, we were put under interrogation and each time when the official was not satisfied with our answer, he would beat me and electrocute me until I fell unconscious. My brother and Tenam received similar treatment.”

“We were then led back to Shigatse and detained in Shigatse PSB Detention Centre. After four months detention, Shigatse People’s Intermediate Court sentenced me to a two years’ imprisonment term with deprivation of political rights for two years. My brother, Lungtok, and Tenam were sentenced to a four years’ imprisonment term and deprivation of political rights for four years. All of us transferred to Drapchi Prison in Lhasa to serve the term. I was imprisoned in unit eight whereas Lungtok was imprisoned in unit 1 and Tenam was put in unit 4. Although we were not made to do any manual work, we were put inside the cell for the whole day except for toilet breaks two times in a day. While in prison, political prisoners have to study three books: ‘Crimes by a citizen’, ‘Guide to a law abiding citizen’ and ‘History of Tibet and crushing of the separatists’. The political prisoners have to memorize the books and their meals are cut if they fail to do so. ”

“On 3 July 2003, I was released upon completion of term and my brother was also released two years later on 3 July 2003 upon completion of his term. However, Tenam was released on 18 July 2005 although he should have been released on the same day my brother was released.”

“After release, I stayed at my home until I came here (Kathmandu). I couldn’t go to my old monastery since the monastery authorities have been

instructed not to accept me.”

Jigme Gyatso fled Tibet once again to pursue his monastic studies in exile. He arrived in Kathmandu, Nepal, at the end of July.

Telephone directory and pictures of the Dalai Lama lead to imprisonment for a woman fleeing Tibet

Dolker Tsering (name changed for security purpose), 39, a resident of Lhasa served a two years' term when she tried to flee Tibet in 2002. After serving her term in Nyalam Public Security Bureau (PSB) Detention Centre and Drapchi Prison, she was released in March 2005. She made another attempt to flee Tibet and fortunately reached the Tibetan Reception Centre (TRRC) in Kathmandu, Nepal, in July 2005.

Dolker said, “In October 2002, I departed from my hometown along with my relatives' children who were to be sent to schools in India. When we reached Lhasa, I found a Nepalese guide to take the children safely across to Nepal since none of them had legal travel permits. The guide was paid 2700 Yuan for the job. I started later with 15

other Tibetans.”

“The children and the guide were however arrested at the Dram border town. I immediately asked a friend living in Dram to secure the release of the children. Unfortunately I too was arrested by the Dram police and the officials took away my travel permit and the Nepalese currencies that I had. The police then led me to Dram PSB Detention Centre where the police further frisked my body. They discovered a telephone directory booklet listing phone numbers of the various departments of the Tibetan government-in-exile in my purse. They also pulled off the picture of the Dalai Lama and the Karmapa hooked onto a thread around my neck.”

“After detaining us for four days without food or water, we were then shifted to Nyalam County Detention Centre where we were detained for three days. Except for me and the children, all the others were released and instructed to go back to their hometown. However, we were transferred to the newly constructed prison in Shigatse. Officially it is called “Reception centre” for Tibetans passing through to Nepal but in function it is a detention centre for travelers arrested along the Nepal-Tibet border. We were detained for four months and the

children were later released.”

“I was transferred to Sangyip Prison in Lhasa where I was detained for a month to undergo further interrogations. After that I was again shifted to Shigatse PSB Detention Centre and then to Nyalam PSB Detention Centre. After two more months of interrogations, Nyalam County court passed a two years' imprisonment term for me. The court further said that the term will be counted from the detention in Nyalam Detention Centre onwards and the six months' detention prior to that in the other Detention Centres will not be taken into account.”

“I was then transferred to Shigatse Nyari Prison where I was imprisoned for three months and then transferred to Lhasa to serve the remaining term in Drapchi Prison unit number three. After one year and five months in Drapchi Prison, I was released on 30 March 2005.”

“Upon release I came to know that my husband has married another woman. With no where to go, I decided to go into exile and start a new life.” ♦



Nyalam prison near the Nepal-Tibet border



The “Reception Center,” a detention centre in Shigatse for Tibetans caught attempting to flee into exile

photo courtesy: ICT

Mining activity makes life miserable for nomads

Jamyang Jinpa, 27, a native of Theko Village, Ngura Township, Machu County, Gansu Province, reported to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy gold mining activities in his region. According to him, the miners have created devastating effects on the livelihood of the nomads in the region.

Jamyang reported, "Since July 2004 Chinese miners have been mining Dokri, a hill located in Nyima Township, located 15 Kms away from Machu County. Nobody was allowed to go near the hill. The area was surrounded by barbwire and police were posted outside the fencing to guard the area. The nomads who visit the hill during their seasonal rotation have to take their livestock elsewhere since they were forbidden to take their livestock beyond the area. The Chinese miners have discovered rich gold deposits in the area and used dynamites and other explosives to mine the gold. Due to such explosives, the rivers downstream have become polluted and the water is undrinkable due to the chemicals. Around the end of last year, about 40 livestock died after drinking from the polluted river.

The local populace made appeals to the authorities to stop the mining since their livelihood was at stake. However, the authorities dismissed the appeal and told the villagers and the nomads that the land they live on belongs to the government and they can do whatever they deem necessary."

"The hill has been a traditional source of livelihood for the local populace. Due to the chemicals used in the explosives, the hill has been rendered useless. Not only on the hill, grass does not grow on the neighbouring areas as well. Since the livestock of the nomads do not have enough to eat, they die making the nomads miserable."

Phasing out the nomadic culture

"The authorities tell the nomads to change their live-style and take businesses as an alternative. As an incentive the authorities told that they would be exempted to pay taxes and that their children would be admitted in schools. The authorities further told that they should build houses on their land and the government will bear half the cost of the construction. However, when the constructions

were over, the nomads were made to pay 70% of the cost. Moreover, the second storey of the houses was taken back by the government and Chinese immigrants were settled in the houses."

Over the recent years, many such cases have been reported to TCHRD. As a strategy the government makes promises to the Tibetans to lure them into their projects and upon the completion of the projects families either do not receive a single dime or made to pay more than that promised. The authorities lure the nomads and farmers to clear their land for developmental projects and advise them to take up businesses which generates more money to the government treasury.

TCHRD is concerned at the malpractices the government of PRC employs in luring uneducated nomads and farmers to give way to government projects. Due to the sudden change in their occupation, nomads and farmers are unable to sustain themselves and often reduced to begging in the urban areas. ♦



A poor nomadic family



A nomadic caravan in search of green pastures



TCHRD welcomes new Executive Director



The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) welcomes Mr. Urgen Tenzin as the new Executive Director of the Centre. Mr. Urgen was selected following an interview conducted on 10 June 2005 by a committee of three panelists. He assumed the post on 1 July 2005.

Mr. Urgen was born in Gangtok, India, in 1964. He did his schooling at the Central School for Tibetans in Darjeeling. During his school days, he showed his leadership ability when he set up a students' voluntary committee to look after orphaned children studying in the school. He obtained his Bachelors Degree from Punjab University, Chandigarh in 1985 and later secured his Masters Degree in Sociology from Mysore University, South India. During his college days, he served as an executive member of the Regional Tibetan Freedom Movement. He also undertook many other activities for

freedom in Tibet. He was also a member for three years of the Mundgod chapter of the Regional Tibetan Youth Congress.

He was elected as a member of the Mungod Local Tibetan Assembly in 1994. In 1997, he was elected as the Chairman of the Local Tibetan Assembly in which he continued to serve until 2000. In 2001, Mr. Urgen was elected as a member of the 13th Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD), the Tibetan-Parliament-in-Exile. He served as a member of the Standing Committee of the ATPD between 2002-2005.

All the staff members of TCHRD extend their heartiest welcome to the new Executive Director. We wish him success in every endeavor he undertakes as the leader of the Centre. ♦

Workshop on Chinese law

A workshop on the Chinese legal system was organized by the Kashag, Secretariat of the Central Tibetan Administration (C.T.A), from 5-15 July 2005. During the 16 days workshop in the Lhakpa Tsering memorial hall of the Department of Information and International Relations, Prof. Yash Ghai from Hong Kong University and Mr. Fu Hualing gave an intensive workshop on the Chinese constitution and Chinese legal system. Along with 13 other participants from the C.T.A, Ms. Norzin Dolma, Senior Programme Officer, Mr. Tashi Choephel and Mr. Tsering Agloe, Researchers, took part in the workshop. ♦

Briefing by TCHRD staff

On 2 July 2005, Mr. Tsering Agloe, spoke about the current human rights situation in Tibet to participants of a workshop organized by the Tibetan Centre for Conflict Resolution (TCCR). The group consisted of participants from Asian countries as well as Tibetans. ♦



Release of Annual Report 2004 in Tibetan language

TCHRD released the Annual Report 2004: Human Rights Situation in Tibet in Tibetan language in July 2005. The report, detailing the human rights violations in Tibet in the year 2004, is for its Tibetan language readers. The membership for the Tibetan language publications have risen enormously in 2004 and continues to grow. ♦