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HUMAN RIGHTS

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China's border patrol opens fire on a group of fleeing Tibetan refugees

Chinese border patrol officers fired live ammunition on a group of 51 Tibetan refugees fleeing Tibet. Except for three who managed to reach the Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre (TRRC) in Kathmandu, Nepal, the situation of the remaining people in the group remains unknown. It is feared that they might have been arrested in the aftermath of pursue by the armed officers.

One of the escapees, who wishes to remain anonymous said, "We set off from Lhasa on 10 August 2005 and reached Dingri County on 26 August 2005. We took a rest and some went into sleep, then, the guide all of a sudden shouted us to run immediately."

"About 30 Chinese border officers including Tibetans officers have learned of our escape and have surrounded us from all sides. The Tibetan officers threatened us not to flee or they would open fire. Scared, the members of our

group began to run recklessly into different directions. The officers opened fire and all of us got scattered in the chaos."

"Fortunately the three of us managed to escape the firing and reached the Nepal-Tibet border from where officials from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees secured our safe passage till Kathmandu."

The group consisted of people of different ages and from different areas in Tibet. There were two nuns, thirteen monks and six children in the group. They have come from different areas of Tibet like Kardze County, Drakyab County, Chamdo, Dege County. The majority of the group (24 people) had come from Bri Ru County, Nagchu Prefecture, "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR"). It is said that all of them attempted to escape Tibet due to restrictions on religious teachings, lack of educational opportunities and poor livelihood in Tibet. ♦

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child asks China to allow access to the Panchen Lama by an independent body

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) called upon China to allow an independent body to verify the case of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama of Tibet, while adopting its concluding observations at the 40th session of the committee on 30 September 2005.

The International Campaign for Tibet based in the U.S.A reported that the Committee on review of the second periodic report of China raised concerns about the 16-year-old Panchen Lama and about religious education in Tibet. The

Committee sought access to the child by an independent body to confirm his current status and well being. The head of the Chinese delegation, in his response said that the request would be passed onto higher authorities.

Prof. Jacob Doek, during his remarks said, "I still fail to understand why it is so difficult for China to allow access to the boy by an independent body" and described the case as a "thorny issue because that particular boy has been taken against his and his parents' will from Tibet to China." The Chinese delegation

as usual responded that "too much interference creates too many problems." The Chinese delegation then upheld the usual stand in declaring that the boy and his parents did not wish to be disturbed due to security reasons.

2005 marks the 10th anniversary of the disappearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his parents following their abduction on 17 May 1995. The current call for action comes nine years after the CRC last reviewed China's report in May 1996. China is scheduled to submit its next report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on 31 March 2009. ♦

China recommences “patriotic education” campaign in Tibet’s monastic institutions

The People’s Republic of China recommenced implementation of the “patriotic education” campaign in monastic institutions in Tibet, according to testimonies received from Tibetan monks who fled into exile. There has been a noted rise in the intensity of the campaign, which is being carried out vigorously in the monastic institutions in and around Lhasa City, “Tibet Autonomous Region” (‘TAR’). Monks who fled Tibet in the aftermath of the campaign reported expulsions of monks from their monasteries.

Three young Tibetan monks, who escaped from Tibet in September 2005, reported conduct of “patriotic education” in June 2005 in their monastery, Talung Monastery located in Phenpo Lhundrup County, Lhasa Municipality, ‘TAR’. The monastery which housed around 120 monks reportedly has only 20 monks who are registered with the Religious Bureau. Earlier the monks were issued with five different political literatures to study; two additional literatures were distributed in June 2005. The monks were notified that officials from the County Religious Bureau would arrive in the monastery in July 2005 to conduct examinations. Monks, above 18 years of age, were ordered to condemn the Dalai Lama as a “separatist,” and to pledge loyalty to the mainland China during the next visit of the officials. Upon learning the pre-requisites set by the authorities for enrollment in monastery, a large number of monks left the monastery voluntarily before the arrival of the officials.

In another instance, in June 2005, the officials from the Religious Bureau visited Gyabdak Nunnery, located in Dzongshul village in Phenpo Lhundrup County, “TAR”. The officials conducted “patriotic education” and demanded the 50 nuns of the nunnery to pose for

individual photographs. Except for six nuns who are members of the Nunnery’s Democratic Management Committee (DMC), the remaining nuns refused to comply with the order. Consequently the officials nullified their enrollment in the nunnery and called for their immediate expulsion. Reportedly the pictures were to be used for official propagandist purposes. The expelled nuns are reported to be staying in their respective homes currently.

In the beginning of April 2005, officials from the Lhasa Religious Bureau began to conduct a three month long “patriotic education” campaign in Sera Monastery, one of the three great monasteries of Tibet. The monks were issued six different literatures to study and four education sessions per week were conducted. The literatures were titled “Handbook on Crushing the Separatists,” “Handbook of Contemporary Policies,” “Handbook of Policies on Religion,” “Handbook on Law,” “Handbook on Ethics for the Masses,” “Handbook of History of Tibet”. The monks were subjected to random questions regarding the texts, and an examination was conducted at the end of the campaign in July 2005 to test their knowledge regarding the handbooks and their allegiance to the state. Reportedly 18 monks were expelled out of which eight monks faced detention in the Public Security Bureau Detention Centre.

In another reported incident, which could not be confirmed yet, 13 nuns from Shugseb Nunnery located in the outskirts of Lhasa City were expelled during the conduct of the “patriotic education” campaign in the nunnery. Another monk-refugee from Drepung Monastery in Lhasa who arrived into exile recently reported that the “patriotic education” campaign began in his monastery on the first week of October 2005.

On 31 October 2004, Lobsang Gyurmey, head of the Committee for Patriotic Education in Lhasa, in his opening speech during the weeklong workshop for officials in charge of “patriotic education” in monasteries and nunneries in Lhasa, said, *“Patriotic Education should be implemented absolutely 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]

The “patriotic education” campaign first started in 1996 forms one of the major causes of religious repression in Tibet. This campaign has created havocs in the life of the clergy and in the monastic community within Tibet. The campaign is used as a tool to

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Handbooks issued during the “patriotic education” campaign in the monastic institutions

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

Tibetan arrested prior to the 40th founding anniversary of the “TAR”, whereabouts unknown



Sonam Gyalpo

Sonam Gyalpo, 40, a tailor by profession was arrested by officers from the Chinese secret service agency (*Ch: Ang jang jue*) on 28 August 2005. His arrest came about a few days prior to the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the “Tibet Autonomous Region” (“TAR”) on 1 September 2005.

The authorities in Tibet have intensified vigil on the Tibetans with political incidents background and have launched the summer 2005 “Strike Hard”

campaign to round up all those suspected of disrupting the celebration.

Around 6 pm in the evening of August 28, 2005, when Sonam Gyalpo and his wife, Tsamchoe, returned home after closing the stall, 16 officials from the secret service were waiting for them. Sonam was asked to sign a document, however, when he tried to make inquiries about it, the official told him that they have received orders

from the higher authorities to arrest him. Immediately after he signed the document, four officers took him away in a jeep and the 12 other officers began to ransack his house. After a massive search by overturning every item in the house including rice and flour containers, slicing butter slabs, the officers discovered “incriminating materials” in the house. Four video tapes containing teachings of the Dalai Lama, few political literatures and pictures of the Dalai Lama were found in his

house.

After being led away by the secret service officers, the whereabouts of Sonam Gyalpo remain unknown.

Background information

Sonam, when he was a monk in the Drepung Monastery, initiated a peaceful demonstration along with 20 other monks on 27 September 1987. He was charged of “counter-revolutionary” activities and sentenced to three years imprisonment in Drapchi Prison.

After his release from prison on 20 September 1990, he made a visit to India. On 23 July 1993, Lhasa Public Security Bureau officials came to his home and led him away to Sitru Detention Centre where he was detained for a few days. The officials then secretly transferred him to Shigatse Nyari Detention Centre, about 260 kms away from Lhasa, for further interrogations.

After six months of detention in Shigatse Detention Centre, he was brought back to Sangyip Prison (“TAR” PSB Detention Centre) in Lhasa where he was further detained for six months. ♦

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stabilize and to exert control over what the Chinese authorities term “the hotbed of dissent activities,” referring to the monastic institutions. The forcible implementation of the campaign in garnering loyalty to the state is in direct contravention with many international human rights provisions on religion.

The monastic community is placed in an extremely difficult position either to comply with the Party and commit religious blasphemy or to leave the monastic life clandestinely or out of compulsion. The United States Congressional-Executive Commission on China in its 2005 Annual Report released on 11 October 2005 stated there has been “no improvement overall in human rights conditions in China over the past year, and increased government restrictions on Chinese citizens who worship in state-controlled venues or write for state-controlled publications.” It further stated that “The religious environment for Tibetan Buddhism has not improved in the past year. The Party demands that Tibetan Buddhists promote patriotism toward China and repudiate the Dalai Lama, the religion’s spiritual leader.”

Despite strong criticism from the international community, religious repression under the “patriotic education” campaign continues in Tibet. The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) has documented known expulsions of 11,383 clergy between January 1996 and August 2004 under the “patriotic education” campaign. (list on pages 57-64 at the link below)

http://www.tchrd.org/publications/topical_reports/strike_hard-2004/strike_hard-2004.pdf ◆

Tibetans jailed in Nepal, deportation likely

A Tibetan refugee from Tibet, Sonam Tsering, 18, has been jailed in Dilli Bazaar Jail in Kathmandu, Nepal, following his arrest by the police upon arrival in Kathmandu around 7 October 2005. Although the arrestee’s native county in Tibet could not be established currently, he is said to belong to Golog (*Ch: Guoluo*) Tibet Autonomous Prefecture (‘TAP’), Qinghai Province.

Sonam, who arrived in Kathmandu, holding *Tong Xin Zhang* (travel permit which allows one to travel till the border), during the night, around 7 October 2005, headed straight to the Swayambunath area in Kathmandu, where he was arrested by the Nepalese police. On 9 October 2005, he was handed over to the Immigration Department of the Nepalese Home Ministry. The Immigration Department imposed a monetary penalty of Nepalese Rupees 27,000/- (Approx USD 375) or an imprisonment term of three years. Since, Sonam failed to pay the penalty, he was subsequently sentenced to three years term in Dilli Bazaar Jail in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Earlier, another Tibetan exile returnee, Norbu Tsering, 25, was arrested on 24 September 2005 at the Nepal-Tibet border while on his way

back to his native village in Kyidong (*Ch: Jilong Xian*) County, Shigatse Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region (“TAR”). After being handed over to the Nepalese Immigration Department on 28 September 2005, he was imposed a similar monetary penalty of Nepalese Rupees 28, 651/- which he failed to pay and consequently was sentenced to three years’ and three months imprisonment term.

Both Sonam Tsering and Norbu Tsering are currently imprisoned in Dilli Bazaar Jail. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) based in Kathmandu has been approached; however, due to the ongoing three-day *Dasain* national holiday in Nepal, their status or hopes of release could not be ascertained.

On 31 May 2003, Nepal deported 18 Tibetan refugees to Tibet under pressure from the Chinese Embassy in Nepal despite massive international appeal. TCHRD is gravely concerned about the two Tibetans who might face a similar fate. The Centre calls upon the international community to help secure the release of the two Tibetans. ◆



A wailing woman helplessly trying to stop the bus carrying the deportees

Dream of education in exile, deportation and back

Rinchen Dondup, one of the 18 Tibetan deportees on 31 May 2003, successfully arrived in Dharamsala, India, upon his third attempt. Rinchen faced enormous hardships when he along with others was deported back to Tibet by the Nepali authorities in May 2003. While in detention in Tibet, his health deteriorated and he had to undergo operation. Two years later, he made another attempt to come into exile and safely reached the Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre in Dharamsala, India.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy met with him to enquire the developments after he was deported. Rinchen recounts, "I am 17 years old and I belong to Gungthang Village, Karong Township, Kardze County, Kardze "Tibet Autonomous Prefecture" ("TAP"), Sichuan."

"Until 12 years of age, I attended the village elementary school but had to drop due to family financial difficulty. Thereafter I helped my parents in the field works and household chores."

Resettlement in Lhasa in search of opportunities

"Due to lack of opportunity in our village, my parents decided to move to Lhasa and set up a small business to support the family. My parents wanted me and my younger brother to resume our studies and looked everywhere to seek admission for us. However, my parents couldn't locate a good school where we could get education within the family budget. They then decided to send us to a Tibetan school in India where children get good education. Subsequently, in August 2002, my brother and I along with twenty other Tibetans, started our journey into exile. We passed through Shigatse County but before we arrived in Lhatse County, the local Public Security Bureau arrested us and detained us for a month. But our parents came to Shigatse and bailed

us out by paying 3000 Yuan for each of us."

Second attempt to escape from Tibet

"We returned to Lhasa. In March 2003, my parents thought of a second attempt to send us to India by paying 3000 Yuan for each of us to a guide to take us across. We were 28 people in the group. When we reached Sollokhumbu (Nepal-Tibet border village), a monk in the group fell ill and couldn't continue the journey. His companions stayed back with him and the rest of us continued our journey. Some people in our group suffered from snow blindness while crossing the snowy mountains and were admitted in a small clinic run by westerners. The remaining twenty continued to move towards Nepal."

Arrest in Nepal and deportation

"On reaching Thangkot (in the outskirts of Kathmandu valley), we were unfortunately arrested by the Nepalese police. Except for two six-year old kids who were handed over

the Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre in Kathmandu, the remaining 18 of us were detained in Dilli Bazaar jail. The group consisted of people in the age range of 15 to 50 years old. After nearly after two months detention, the Nepal Immigration Department decided to release us on the payment of \$37 each. On 30 May 2003, staff from the TRRC visited us in jail. Incidentally, a Chinese official from the Chinese embassy along with a few Nepalese security officials came to the prison to take us in charge. However, upon our strong protest, the officials returned. In the evening at 5 pm, we were shifted to another prison - Hanuman Dhoka jail in Kathmandu."

"At 5 am in the morning of 31 May, officials from the Chinese embassy along with 20 Nepalese police officers forcibly brought us out of the jail and threw us into a vehicle. The officers drove us to the Dram (Nepal-Tibet border town) and handed us to the Chinese border security officials. After a few days

continued next page



Rinchen showing the scar on his abdomen after undergoing surgery during detention

detention in there, we were taken to the Shigatse Detention Centre.”

Hospitalization in Tibet

“Earlier while in Nepal jail, I suffered from diarrhea and high fever, my health began to deteriorate at the Shigatse Detention Center. I was admitted to the local People’s Hospital. My health turned grave and with the consent of my brother, the doctor performed surgery on me. After the operation, I was kept in the hospital for nearly two months and subsequently taken back to the Detention Centre. Most of the group members were bailed out, but my brother was still there. Finally our uncle arrived and secured our release by paying 2500 Yuan for each of us.”

After release, Rinchen Dhondup underwent further treatment and fully regained his health. In September 2005, he made his third attempt to escape from Tibet and successfully reached the Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre in Dharamsala, India, after passing through Nepal. Rinchen is happy to arrive in exile and wishes to get an education in a school set up by the Tibetan-government-in-exile. ♦

Tension in Tibetan areas over grassland and livestock

The Chinese authorities’ development plans in Tibet have devastating impacts on the lives of the Tibetan farmers and nomads. Largely claimed as the greatest achievement of the Chinese communist revolution by providing basic subsistence to its masses, the Tibetans living in the rural areas continue to struggle in their daily subsistence. The land reform policies and other development policies implemented in the Tibetan areas have led to the complete marginalization of Tibetans and have made their daily lives miserable. Tensions have also broken out among Tibetans, authorities and ethnic Chinese.

Two new arrivals, who wish to remain anonymous, from Dharmar Township, Sershul County, Kardze “Tibet Autonomous Prefecture” (“TAP”) reported beating of Tibetan residents by County authorities when the Tibetans plucked medicinal plants from a prohibited area for their sustenance. They reported, “The authorities fenced a huge grassland area which has sustained the Tibetans in the neighbouring areas for decades. The nomads graze their animals in the grassland and the local residents search for *Yartsa Gunbu* (medicinal plant) in the grassland which fetch them good price in the market. The families have sustained themselves for decades in this way.”

“In March 2003, the authorities fenced the grassland and prohibited anyone from crossing into it. The nomads and the families who have sustained themselves from the grassland were left anxious with no other source of income. After a year, the authorities had still not lifted the prohibition, so about 2000 people from Thenda Township, Dshung Township, and Dharmar Township

destroyed the fence and began to pluck the plants. When the authorities came to know about the incident, 11 police vehicles arrived at the spot.”

“The police managed to calm the protest from the people but couldn’t stop them from plucking the plants. Consequently, in the following days, they rounded up eight Tibetans and detained them at the local Public Security Bureau for interrogations. They were severely beaten while in detention. The prohibition has not been lifted to this day.”

Earlier in May 2005, a Tibetan reported to TCHRD clash between Tibetans in Dzatoe County, Jyekundo “TAP”, Qinghai, over plucking of *Yartsa Gunbu*. The clash which took place on 20 May 2005 between residents of Dzatoe County and Nangchen County have led to the death of two Tibetans and injured many others.”

In another incident reported by the Radio Free Asia on 8 September 2005, hundreds of Tibetans burned down a Chinese slaughterhouse in Manikengo Township in Kardze “TAP”. The slaughterhouse opened by a Chinese entrepreneur and a county government official pressured the local Tibetans to sell their animals for slaughter at below-market prices. The Tibetans broke into the building and burned it after freeing all the animals inside. The police rounded up around 50 Tibetans for interrogations in relation to the burning down of the slaughterhouse. Although most of them have been released, around eight Tibetans were reported to be still in custody. ♦



TCHRD ACTIVITIES

Bulletin

TCHRD commemorates the 45th Tibetan Democracy day



On the occasion of the 45th Tibetan Democracy day, TCHRD invited Kalon Tripa, Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, to give a lecture to the Tibetan public at the main temple in McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala. Kalon Tripa spoke on the "Policies of the Tibetan government-in-exile, current political situation, present and future responsibilities".

People from all walks of life braved the heavy rain to listen to Kalon Tripa. The two-hour lecture was followed by a question-answer session during which the public asked a series of questions to Kalon Tripa with emphasis on the current status of the negotiation process. ♦

TCHRD participates in the World Forum for Democratization in Asia

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy participated in the first biennial conference of the World Forum for Democratization in Asia (WFDA) held in Taipei from 15-17 September 2005.

The conference, opened by the President of Taiwan, Chen Shui-bian, saw over 300 democrats from more than 20 different countries promote democracy in Asia. The forum for Asia by the Asians called upon promotion of democracy in Asia and support for democratic movements in Asia by fellow Asian countries.

The Tibetan delegation comprised of Mr. Pema Chhinjor, Former Minister of Security in Tibetan government-in-exile (Steering Committee member of Alliance for Reform and Democracy in Asia), Mr. Khedrup Thondup, former member of Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies, Mr. Tseten Norbu, Tibet Institute and Mr. Tenzin Norgay, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy.

The forum, organized by the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy and four other initiating organizations (ALTSEAN, ARDA, FAD, IID) recognized the stifling role played by the People's Republic of China in promotion of democracy in Asia because of its influence. While recognizing the repression in Tibet by the Chinese government, Tibet received numerable mention during the conference in terms

of religious rights violations and freedom of speech.

The Taipei Declaration on Democracy in Asia adopted at the close of the conference mentions the deteriorating political situation in Tibet, along with other Asian countries with grim political situations. The Tibetan delegation urged the WFDA participating countries to support the "middle way" approach of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the principle of self-determination for the Tibetan people and to press for tangible results from the negotiation process.

Full text of the Taipei Declaration on Democracy in Asia can be viewed at http://www.wfda.net/news_detail.htm?id=154

Full text of the country specific framework for action for Tibet can be viewed at <http://www.wfda.net/UserFiles/File/WFDA%20Framework%20for%20Action%202005-2007.pdf> ♦



South India Tibetan settlements awareness tour



TCHRD staff in Bylakuppe Tibetan settlement

Two staff from TCHRD toured the South India Tibetan settlements to educate the resident Tibetans about the importance of democratic governance and the public participation in electing a good government. In light of the preliminary polls of the 14th Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD) on 11 September 2005, Mr. Ugyen Tsewang, Information Officer, and Mr. Dawa Tsering, Field Officer, visited the Tibetan settlements in Bylakuppe, Hunsur, Mungod and Kollegal. During

their tour from 15 August-15 September, the two encouraged the residents to exercise their fundamental right in voting efficient deputies to the 14th ATPD.

Earlier in May 2005, four staff from TCHRD toured the North Eastern Tibetan settlements to urge the population there to participate actively in electing efficient deputies to the forthcoming 14th ATPD and the second Kalon Tripa of the Tibetan government-in-exile. ♦