



# HUMAN RIGHTS

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HUMAN RIGHTS *update*  
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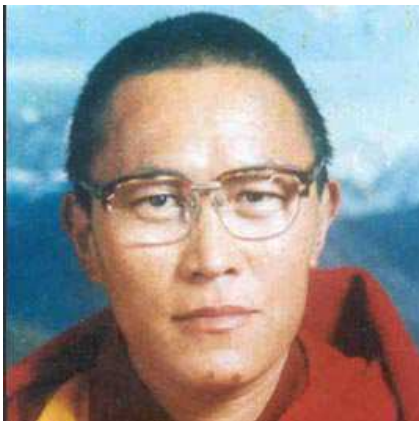
## Lithang and Nyagchuka County Tibetans seek release of their spiritual teacher

On 15 July 2009, the people of Nyagchuka County wrote a powerful petition which called for the release of Tulku Tenzin Delek, their beloved teacher who had been wrongly convicted by the Sichuan Higher People's Court in December 2002 in a bomb explosion incident in Chengdu. The petitioners who were ardent followers of their spiritual teacher signed the petition and marked in blood their fingerprints against their name. Unfortunately, the authorities never took the petition seriously and dismissed it.

With strong determination to seek Tulku's release, seven lay Tibetans departed to Chengdu on 5 December 2009 to appeal the provincial government. However, their journey was intercepted and the officials detained them at a hotel. The next day, three women; Dolker, Dechen Dolma and Youdon, who were proceeding to the central government to appeal were also detained mid way. Upon hearing the arrest of the group of the seven men heading to Chengdu, groups of Tibetans, mostly youth from Othok township, upper and lower Golog, proceeded to Nyagchuka County government headquarter. Thereafter Tibetans from the neighbouring areas had also been flocking to Nyagchuka County

government. However Chinese security forces on the way stopped them from reaching the County Headquarter. Meanwhile a fairly large contingent of People's Armed Police (PAP) was brought to a location called Thang Karma (White Open Field) practicing martial arts and military drills to intimidate the local Tibetans. Despite the block, hundreds of Tibetans gathered from all over the neighbouring areas. Some had to walk over the mountain to reach the spot. Many children and elderly Tibetans also joined in. Despite all the blocking attempts by the authorities, the crowd grew to around 400 and vociferously demanded the immediate release of Tulku Tenzin Delek. During the demonstration seven women collapsed and became unconscious. The protesting Tibetans were running out of food and warm clothes and blankets to brace the chilly winter nights and relatives and supporters were denied access to the protesters and petitioners for delivering food and clothes.

It was on the night of 5 December 2009, around 60 petitioners out of the crowd who gathered at the County government headquarter for the entire day were rounded up and taken to a military garrison. The next morning, motorbikes and clothes belonging to petitioners were left



**Tulkul Tenzin Delek**

unattended with bloodstains. Meanwhile the petitioners began fasting and refused to eat any food served to them unless and until Tulku is released from the prison. Following were identified among the 60 petitioners arrested:

Dukkar Tsering, Jili Jamtrin, Gawa Lodhon, Ngawang Choedrak, Gawa Tsering Dhondup, Lugtsi Aphi, Gyame A-she, A-ka Dorjee, Sherab Dolma (nun), Depo (nun), Dra-be (nun), Me-tha Wangyal, Ga-je Wangchuk, Khewo Tsering, Dorjee Khedrup, Druk Gaythar, Nga-de, Lhama Dhondi, Nyendak, Tsetra Bhuhhu, Ngawang Sherab, A-pha Norbu, Woesser, A-pha Au Bho, Tenzin Dawa, Jinpa, Tashi Choephel, Nyendak, Lobsang Dhondup, Kelsang Lhakyi, A-she, Bhumo, Tenzin Trinley, Nyendak, Lobsang Dhondup, Kelsang Lhakyi, A-she, Bhumo, Tenzin Trinley, Lhama Choedruk.

The remaining Tibetans which had by now swelled to over a thousand continued to sit at the county government making their appeal to release Tulku. The authorities set 3 pm on 9 December 2009 as a deadline for the Tibetans to return to their respective villages. However, the Tibetans continued to press the County government officials even after the deadline.

The authorities then brought over the seven detained petitioners back to the County for talks. Officials from the County as well as Prefecture level held talks with the petitioners to disperse the crowd. They in turn replied that until the authorities release Tulku, the Tibetans won't go back to their homes. The county officials threatened the petitioners of dire consequences, however, they held

their ground that Tulku was innocent and they have made their mind to seek his release, and they won't return until he is released.

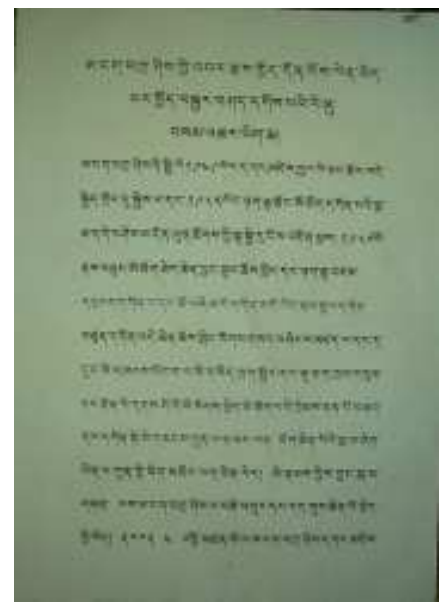
On 10 December 2009, the authorities called the religious figures and elderly monks of the area for a meeting. The officials asked the monks to diffuse the crowd as they might listen to them. The monks replied that if the authorities are serious in settling this dispute and listen to the masses opinion, they can ask the masses to disperse. The authorities promised the masses monthly visits to Tulku in prison. They also released some of the Tibetan detainees immediately and promised to detain others after a week.

On 11 December, a meeting was held where in officials from the township, county, prefecture, court, representatives of the public and the village heads were present. After hours of meeting where in both the public and the government sides made their opinions, it was decided to allow monthly visits to Tulku in prison and to repair all the motorbikes damaged by the authorities crackdown on the Tibetans and also to provide monetary compensations to those with financial losses. The general public was left in doubts as to whether the authorities will ever keep their promises as they were known to always sway the public in the wrong direction. After the meeting, army vehicles with microphones were doing round of the area warning the people to return by 9 'o' clock or face law enforcement. Moreover, there was increase in the presence of military in the county areas. Sensing major bloodbath, the spiritual figures and elderly monks advised the public to retreat to their respective homes.

On 13 December 2009, around ten detainees were released by the authorities, however, around 20 were still kept in custody. The released detainees had bruises all over their body due to beatings in the detention centre. Despite the cold, they had not been provided any blanket or food while in detention.

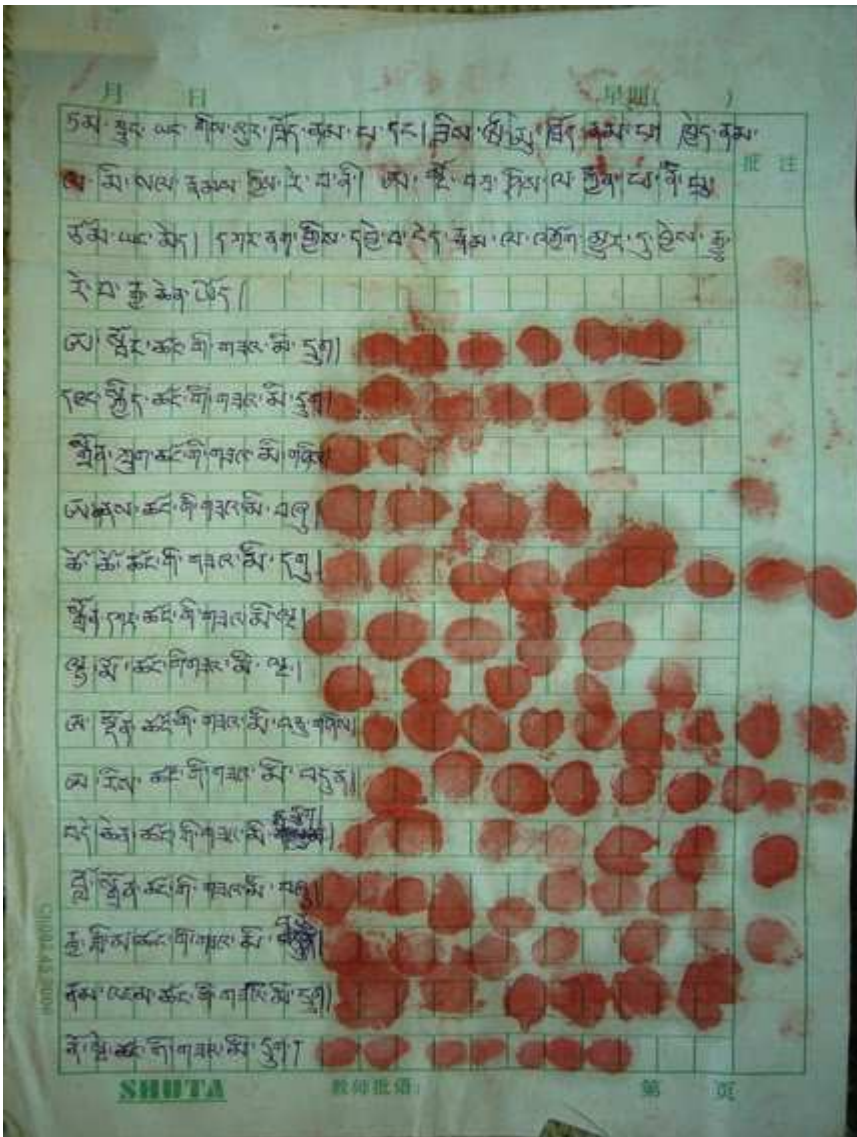
**THE CONTENT OF PETITION**

The main content of the petition dealt on describing Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche as their much loved and revered spiritual teacher, immensely important to the local Tibetans. Tulku also being described as a guide, teacher, father figure to



**The content of petition**

them, particularly local Tibetans sought his advice on a range of matters concerning their livelihood. In their appeal they stated that Tulku used to mediate in many land and pasture disputes amongst the local nomads. In his absence in the last seven years, there have been many disputes over land and pasture ownerships, which led to deaths of several Tibetans. They also described that Tulku's absence has been keenly



Signature

felt and that they are too eager to feel the spiritual presence of Tulku. They also described that they need a spiritual guide who could perform religious rites for Tibetan devotees, particularly to perform Phowa (transferring of consciousness) rite related to guiding the consciousness of dead people in their journey to the next lives. They also explained that to regain peace and harmony once existed in the locality, Tulku must be released and once again be amongst them.

**UNFAIR TRIAL AND SENTENCING**

Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche born in 1950 in Lithang, Tibet, is a highly revered local spiritual figure. In 2002, series of bomb blasts incident took place in Chengdu, which the Chinese officials later charged him of his carrying out the bomb blasts. His relative Lobsang Dhondup charged along with him was immediately executed after a closed trial. Tenzin Delek was granted a two-year reprieve, which was later commuted to life imprisonment on 26 January 2005. Tulku Tenzin Delek also worked for the welfare of local

Tibetans in Lithang, in health, education and religious institutions for Tibetan nomads in eastern Tibet. He was also an ardent advocate for the conservation of environment in the light of China rampant logging and mining, and a mediator of all kinds of disputes amongst the local Tibetans. He was known to be an outspoken admirer and follower of the Dalai Lama, whom he previously had an audience in India. He was immensely popular for his unassuming personality and relating to the everyday needs and problems of ordinary Tibetans in Lithang. Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, now 59, is currently serving life sentence.

Following is full text of the petition translated into English, note that Tenzin Delek Rinpoche is referred to in the Chinese name A'an Zhaxi.

Source: <http://www.highpeakspureearth.com/2009/12/from-woesers-blog-people-of-yajiang-in.html>

We Do Not Recognise the Verdict Against A'an Zhaxi We Want to Have a New Hearing with Regards to the Charges in the Explosion Case A'an Zhaxi (A-ngag Tashi, Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche) was born in 1949 in the village of Degu, Lithang County in the Ganzi Prefecture.

In 1983 he was identified as the reincarnation of the Yajiang County's Orthok Monastery's Lama Adong Phuntsok. Starting in 1987, he constructed Orthok Monastery, Nyagchukha Jamyang Choekhorling, Tsochu Ganden Choeling, Golog Tashikyil, Tsungon Dechen Choeling and many more monasteries. A'an Zhaxi always taught people not to kill, not to steal, not to tell lies, not to shoot animals,

not to gamble, and he also formulated religious tenets. This embodied a great benefit for the people in the monasteries and in the area. Hence, in comparison to other Lamas, the local people particularly trusted and respected A'an Zhaxi.

On 7 April 2002, A'an Zhaxi was arrested by Ganzi Yajiang County Police accused of being one of the hidden instigators responsible for the explosion on Tianfu Square in Chengdu. On 2 December 2002, Ganzi Prefecture's Intermediate People's Court sentenced A'an Zhaxi to death with the sentence suspended for two years. Two years later, some said that his sentence had already been changed to life imprisonment and others said that there was no sentence at all, opinions were widely divided. But his family and religious followers had never seen the official court verdict or any notice concerning his case. Hence, there was no way of verifying the details.

The case against Lobsang Dhondup installing the explosives on Tianfu Square and A'an Zhaxi being the wirepuller is a set-up, it is an act of retaliation by the evil officials and lacks any proof or confessions.

### **No proof**

Nowhere and at no time have there been any witnesses confirming that A'an Zhaxi actually worked out a plan for Lobsang Dhondup to set off an explosion, and neither has there been any witness who has heard anything about such plans. Moreover, Lobsang Dhondup has never admitted or confessed that A'an Zhaxi worked out a plan for him to set off the explosion. The reason for this is: one of Lobsang Dhondup's fellow prisoners, who used to share a cell with him, recalls Lobsang Dhondup once saying to him that A'an Zhaxi has never planned

anything for him and he has also never officially declared or confessed that A'an Zhaxi had worked out a plan for him. The reason why Yajiang County accused A'an Zhaxi is because they say that he excavated a cave to store the explosives and they also came up with groundless accusations such as that he is not a real monk but they have not provided the people with anything proving his guilt.

A'an Zhaxi himself refuses to admit his guilt. Although there have been many false stories claiming that A'an Zhaxi has already candidly confessed everything, it is still rather obvious that he does not at all admit his guilt. On 2 December 2002, when the Ganzi Prefecture's Intermediate People's Court spoke the verdict, in the presence of all, A'an Zhaxi shouted out "don't say that I set up explosives, I have never ever thought about this sort of thing". Afterwards, A'an Zhaxi wrote in a letter to Zirui's people and his close relatives: "I am not guilty, please appeal for justice for me". Moreover, at the end of 2008, when A'an Zhaxi's younger sister Dolkar Lhamo together with Zengtar and Tsering Dekyi went to pay him a visit in prison, they also heard him say: "I absolutely did not work out any plans; I don't even know of any explosion, it would be very kind if you can appeal for justice." Especially on 11 July 2009, when Apapumu went to see A'an Zhaxi, he said: "I am not responsible for these explosions or any other illegal actions, they have pinned this on me, I have always taught people that one should not harm any life, not even that of an ant, how could I then possibly be responsible for such an action? If it is possible to appeal, there is hope

that I may be cleared of all charges. When you leave please go to Zirui for me, tell my relatives and all people of the six Orthok groups, tell everyone that I hope to be cleared of all charges. So, you are in charge, call all people together and do everything possible to help me overturn the verdict.

### **Officials plotted to frame**

Even before the verdict in the case of the explosion, Ganzi Prefecture and Yajiang County had often arrested A'an Zhaxi. For example, from 1998 to 2000, twice in a row A'an Zhaxi had to flee to the remote mountains to take refuge. In the very beginning when he first established Orthok Monastery and Nyagchukha Jamyang Choekhorling, some officials of the Ganzi Prefecture, Yajiang County and Lithang District deliberately made things difficult and obstructed the construction of the monasteries, but because A'an Zhaxi went directly to the great Panchen Lama for help, the prefecture, county and district authorities had to give permission. Also, during the time when A'an Zhaxi fled to the mountains for refuge, thousands of people signed or put their fingerprints on a petition to the authorities to prove his innocence. The appeal went all the way to the county, even to the central government and in the end the authorities' attempt to arrest him failed. When A'an Zhaxi returned to his home town he was happily welcomed by thousands of people, who could not be pushed off the stage by local authorities. Through this, mutual apprehension sharpened by the day, the local authorities harboured more and

more resentment against A'an Zhaxi, he became the thorn in their side waiting for an opportunity to retaliate. On 2 April 2002, they then arrested A'an Zhaxi accusing him of being the mastermind behind the explosions on Tianfu Square in Chengdu, but it is obvious that this is not true.

In conclusion, there does not exist any proof with regards to A'an Zhaxi's sentence, there exists no confession, it is only an act of retaliation of the local authorities against A'an Zhaxi. It is a set-up, a frame-up and an entirely fabricated case. If you are out to condemn somebody, you can always find a charge. If this case is not solved justly, our Zirui region, A'an Zhaxi's relatives and all the people who follow him, regardless of whether the poor turn into beggars, whether men or women, they will definitely not stop appealing for justice. Thus, we sincerely hope that the impartial law of the central government will make its way into this place which is shrouded in the dense fog of conspiracy.

15 July 2009

By the people of Yajiang County,  
Ganzi Prefecture, Sichuan Province

## **TCHRD Press Statement on the 61st Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

Today, 10 December 2009, we celebrate the 61st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is a solemn occasion for all of us about the great importance of this day and virtue of this document to people across the globe. It is once again a solemn reminder for us to redeem our pledge and commitment to promote dignity and justice for all human beings.

Since the birth of this historic document, we have made many positive progresses on non-discrimination, freedom of movement and association, freedom of expression and opinion, freedom from torture and arbitrary detentions. Yet there are many justice yet to be delivered and more freedom to be redeemed and hence let it be our firm pledge that we shall work in this direction, led by courage and our belief in universal rights.

We, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) in last more than one decade has championed the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people, as they continue to suffer greatly under the deplorable conditions imposed by the communist regime in China.

10 December, is also an important occasion for Tibetans, not just as International Human Rights Day but also the day on which the Dalai Lama received his Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, who is regarded as a talisman of justice, freedom and human rights across the globe as well

as the greatest influencer of our times.

TCHRD will continue to work for promotion of the fundamental rights of the Tibetan people as guided by our two "twin missions", to monitor and report the violation of human rights of the Tibetan people inside Tibet and to educate our Tibetan community about human rights, democracy and rule of law.

TCHRD hopes that the global nations through their diplomatic and economic ties will press China on its poor and deplorable human rights track record. It is also our hope that nations never give up dialogue on human rights in the face of more assertive and bully China with its growing economic and military might.

China continues to lack behind in human rights field, she still does not honour her citizens basic and fundamental human rights. For Tibetans, the recent years have been the most difficult times as they continue to reel under tremendous tragedy and misery.

In the last eleven months of 2009, TCHRD has documented, among others, the following few events:

### **Strike Hard campaigns:**

This year the Chinese government launched the "strike hard" campaigns on two occasions. First, a stipulated 42-day winter "Strike Hard" Campaign was launched in Lhasa city on 18 January 2009. The

campaign was to serve many political purposes inside Tibet to forewarn Tibetans from taking part in any of protest and demonstration during coming important political dates like 10 March Tibetan uprising anniversary as well as on the first anniversary of the last year's 14 March protest riot in Lhasa city. State run media claimed, Lhasa City Public Security Bureau (PSB) office deployed 600 officers, around 160 police vehicles and conducted raids on 7 housing blocks, 2922 rented houses, 14 guest house and hotels, 18 bars and 3 internet cafés in Lhasa. It said PSB rounded up 5766 suspects in raids. Under the campaign, the State law enforcement bodies abuse the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people through arbitrary arrest, detention, interrogation and torture, dismissal from jobs and expulsion from religious institutions. During this campaign, at least 81 suspects were detained.

The second "strike hard" campaign of the year was launched on 9 September 2009. The main objective of the "Strike Hard" campaign was to ensure stability and security in the "TAR" ahead of the 60th National Day Celebration. Under such circumstances, overwhelming restriction on daily life of ordinary Tibetans was order of the day. Monasteries and religious institutions were particularly hit hard during both campaigns. The "strike hard" campaigns were launched inside China to fight off crimes and other social ills but inside Tibet they were launched to quell protests and rein in Tibetan nationalistic sentiments. Executions and suspended death sentences:

This year also saw the executions of four Tibetans Lobsang Gyaltzen

and Loyak, Penkyi and unnamed Tibetan on Tuesday, 20 October 2009 for their alleged involvement in last year's mass protest that broke out on 14 March 2008.

Moreover 3 Tibetans were given suspended death sentences and 11 other Tibetans with life imprisonment.

For entire one-year period, they were not given any access to legal representations, legal council, free, fair and open trial. They were tried behind a closed-door court and faced prosecution. No tangible evidences and explanations were given to outside world about their "crimes". The standard legal stipulations enshrined in China Criminal Procedure Law (CPL) were not followed. Despite numerous appeals by human rights activists and international organizations, the Chinese government went ahead with the executions, as if showing a lesson of "killing chickens to scare the monkeys".

#### **Persecution of writers, environment activists, bloggers, musicians and photographers:**

The year is particularly so harsh for Tibetan writers, photographers and civil societies. This year TCHRD documents 23 known cases of arrests of writers and civil society activists.

Kunga Tsayang, a Tibetan writer-photographer was arrested on 17 March 2009 and given five years in prison sentence on charges of so-called "disclosing state secrets". He wrote under a pen name "sun of snowland" (Tib: Gang-Nyi) was an amateur photographer, a passionate writer, essayist, chronicler of the

new Tibetan generation. Kunga's case goes to show the length of difficulties Tibetans undergo for mere expression of opinions.

. Similarly Kunchok Tsephel, another Tibetan who run a Tibetan language and culture website - Chomei (eng. Lamp) was arrested at his home in Gansu Province. The website was dedicated to the propagation of Tibetan arts and literature and was self-funded.

. Other civil society activists arrested by the Chinese authorities were: Dhondup Wangchen (documentary film maker), Drokru Tsultrim, Kang Kunchok, Tashi Dhondup (musician and singer), Nyima Wangchuk (blogger), Yeshe Namkha, Gonpo Tsering and Passang Norbu.

#### **Losar and farming Boycott:**

. This year Tibetans in Kardze region in Sichuan Province organized boycott of Losar (Tibetan New Year) and farming boycott to protest against China's massive crackdown of peaceful Tibetan protesters in all parts of Tibet in Spring 2008. The Chinese government arrested many Tibetans who boycott farming and forego Tibetan New Year celebration. The local Tibetans filled their streets with posters declaring their vow to boycott farming activities and the Chinese authorities calling for a public meeting and issuing warning that "anyone who defies farming will face arrest and their land will be officially confiscated." There had been scores of arbitrary arrests; detentions, interrogations, tortures and many even disappeared for a year. Kardze is still one of the most volatile regions of Tibet and where human rights violations were mostly reported.

**Suicide cases:**

In recent times, TCHRD has been documenting a rising number of suicides in Tibet, particularly in its religious institutions. For several decades the monks and nuns inside Tibet have been persecuted in the name of “reform” and “patriotic education”.

They were forced to denounce their own spiritual guru and to abuse their highly respected lamas highly objected under monastic vows and code of conduct. In doing so, they were subjected to extreme psychological traumas and impositions of irreconcilable demands, which eventually force them to commit suicide. The monks and nuns are left with no option but to embrace death since the requisites laid down by the Chinese authority are beyond sanity. The suicide has been on the rise in Tibet’s monastic community since the Spring 2008 protests in Tibet. TCHRD documents 14 suicides and 2 attempted suicides since Spring 2008 protests.

**The people who committed suicides were:**

(1) Lobsang Jinpa committed suicide on 27 March 2008, (2) Legtsok, 75 years old, committed suicide on 30 March 2008, (3) Thoesam, 29 years old, committed suicide on 16 April 2008, (4) Trangma committed suicide on 18 June 2008, (5) Thokmey a.k.a Tsangpa Thokmey committed suicide on 22 March 2008, (6) Namdrok Khakyab committed suicide on 19 March 2008, (7) Tashi Sangpo committed suicide on 21 March 2009, (8) Tusong committed

suicide on 16 April 2008, (9) An unnamed nun in her thirties from Cholung nunnery committed suicide on 12 April 2008, (10) Three unnamed monks from Dugu Monsatery, (11) Lobsang Tsultrim committed suicide on 3 July 2008, (12) Shedup committed suicide on 2 April 2009, (13) An unnamed nun, 21 years old, from Choekhor Nunnery committed suicide 12 April 2008, (14) Lobsang Tsomo, a nun at Chokhor Nunnery, committed suicide on 12 April 2008, (15) Attempt to Suicide- Two Drepung Monastery monks, Kelsang and Damchoe, both originally from Kirti Monastery in Sichuan Province, (16) Attempt to Suicide- Tapey, a monk at Kirti Jopa Monastery, Ngaba County, Sichuan Province, attempted suicide by self-immolation on 27 February 2009.

**Persecution of Religious leaders:**

This year also saw horrifying level of restriction and persecution of Tibet’s religious institutions in the name of “patriotic education” and “national security”. The trends were of persecutions were often surprise raids at monks’ residences at nights, conducts “patriotic education” campaigns for months, breaking down monastic order and discipline by conducting political education on “socialism” and forcing monks and nuns to study the constitution of China. The Chinese authorities also enforced the monks to denounce the Dalai Lama, to stamp on the pictures of their revered spiritual teachers. Those who failed or refused to comply the authorities’ orders were arrested, detained, interrogated, tortured, disrobe and then expelled from the monastery as a kind of ex-

communication. Often charismatic head lamas were persecuted by fabricating false charges.

The classic case was that of Tulku Phurbu Tsering Rinpoche, a popular and charismatic spiritual figure in Kardze region of Tibet, who was arrested on alleged weapon charges related to last year’s peaceful protests in Kardze, Sichuan Province. According to many sources, he was reportedly tortured for four days and nights upon detention and forced into making a confession after a police interrogation. Police even threatened his wife and son of detention if Tulku did not comply, according to his lawyer.

Following his arrest, his monk and nun followers and disciples staged protests; many of them were arrested, detained and tortured. Several of them were still being involuntarily disappeared.

On this anniversary, TCHRD urges the Government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) to put an immediate end to the practice of torture, enforced disappearances, “patriotic education” campaigns, arbitrary detention and information blackouts and also calls upon the PRC government to respect and comply with international standards of human rights practices and its own constitutional guarantees.

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The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is an independent centre which aims to promote and protect human rights and a democratic polity for Tibet. It attempts to educate Tibetans on human rights principles and to work with other human rights and democracy groups as part of a worldwide movement towards these ends. TCHRD is registered under the Indian Societies Registration Act 21 of 1860 in 1996.

If you would like to subscribe to TCHRD's monthly Human Rights update or to order one of our publications, please send your name and postal details (including e-mail) to our office.

#### Partial list of TCHRD publications:

•The Next Generation: *The State of Education in Tibet Today* (1997) • Behind Bars: *Prison Conditions in Tibet* (1998) • Closing the Doors: *Religious Repression in Tibet* (1998) • *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Tibetan Translation) (1998) • *Democracy: An Education Booklet* (1998) • Fearless Voices: *Accounts of Tibetan Former Political Prisoners* (1998) • Human Rights: *An Education Booklet* (1998) • *A Guide to Human Rights* (1999) • *A guide to Democracy* (1999) • *Tales of Terror: Torture in Tibet* (1999) • *Briefing paper for travellers to Tibet* (1999) • *Torture and Ill-Treatment in Tibet* (2000) • *Racial Discrimination in Tibet* (2000) • *Impoverishing Tibetans: China's flawed economic policy* (2000) • *Destruction of Serthar Institute : A Special Report (2002)* • *Dispossessed: Land and Housing Rights in Tibet* (2002) • *Strike hard Campaign: China's crackdown on political dissidence* (2004) • *State of education in Tibet: A human rights perspective* (2004) • *Kuxing: Torture in Tibet* (2005) • *Death Penalty in China* (2005) • *International Bill of Human Rights* (2005) • *TCHRD 1996-2006: A Decade of Human Rights Research* • *Railway and China's Development Strategy in Tibet: A Tale of Two Economies* • *Prisoners of Tibet* • *Annual Report : Human Rights Situation in Tibet (1996 - 2008)* • *Uprising in Tibetan 2008* • *Briefing paper for travellers to Tibet*

## Join hands with TCHRD

Human Rights begin with you. Your concern and participation make a difference. Your support could instill faith and hope in those who have been stripped of their human dignity.

### Join hands with TCHRD BECOME A MEMBER

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