

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 164/93 (ASA 17/20/93, 19 May 1993) - Mass arrest/Fear of Ill-treatment

People's Republic of China Lobsang Yonten
(Tibet Autonomous Region): Gendun Rinchen
and an unknown number of Tibetans (now
thought to be less than 100)

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman confirmed on 25 May 1993 that the two Lhasa residents, Gendun Rinchen and Lobsang Yonten, were detained for political activities. They have been accused of stealing "a large amount of state secrets" and engaging in "separatist activities which directly threatened China's national security". The two men are reported to have been involved in monitoring human rights violations in Tibet. The authorities have not disclosed where they are being held and it is feared they may be ill-treated.

Mao Rubai, Vice-Governor of the Tibet Autonomous Region, denied recently that their arrest was related to the 16 May 1993 arrival in Lhasa of a delegation of European Community (EC) diplomats. He claimed they were detained well before that date and also denied that over 100 Tibetans had been detained in connection with the EC visit.

On 24 and 25 May, just after the departure of the EC diplomats, major protests took place in Lhasa involving up to 2,000 people. The unrest reportedly started in protest at sharp price rises and rent increases, but may also have been triggered off by the arrests preceding the EC visit. According to Tibetan exiles, another possible source of discontent was the anniversary on 23 May of the 1951 signing of a document incorporating Tibet into China, a day celebrated by the Chinese as the symbol of the "Peaceful Liberation" of Tibet. Unconfirmed reports said that some Tibetan monks were arrested on 23 May 1993 for briefly raising the Tibetan flag.

According to foreign residents in Lhasa the demonstration on 24 May began peacefully, but police started firing tear-gas when rocks were thrown by the protesters and slogans were changed into calls for Tibetan independence. According to another report the police later opened fire into the air, but there were no confirmed reports of injuries. Police were seen taking some protesters away. It is feared that further arbitrary arrests may be carried out as a result of these protests.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International is concerned about the treatment of Tibetan prisoners during detention. The organization has had reports of at least three political prisoners dying in detention in Tibet since 1988. Two Tibetans, recently conditionally released from Drapchi Prison had suffered severe paralysis as a result of torture and sustained

ill-treatment (see UA 425/91, ASA 17/72/91 of 5 December 1991 and follow-ups ASA 17/06/92 of 13 January 1992, ASA 17/01/93 of 5 January 1993 and ASA 17/16/93 of 1 April 1993). Despite earlier well-documented reports of ill-treatment of prisoners in Tibetan prisons and detention centres, the Chinese authorities have not taken any steps to investigate allegations or to ensure the safety of prisoners at risk, and suspend from duty those officers alleged to have used torture.

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FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters in English or your own language:

- expressing concern that Gendun Rinchen and Lobsang Yonten are reported to be detained arbitrarily because of their involvement in monitoring human rights, but have been officially accused of "stealing state secrets" and engaging in "separatist activities";

- urging the authorities to disclose the specific information on which these accusations are based and calling for their immediate and unconditional release if the charges against them are not based on recognizably criminal offences in accordance with international standards;

- urging the authorities to take immediate measures to ensure that they are not ill-treated in detention, and to disclose their whereabouts;

- urging the authorities to release immediately and unconditionally any Tibetans who peacefully participated in the 24 and 25 May 1993 protests, and urging that further arbitrary arrests do not take place as a result of these protests.

APPEALS TO

1) Premier of the People's Republic of China:

LI Peng Zongli

Guowuyuan

9 Xihuangchenggenbeijie

Beijingshi 100032

People's Republic of China

Telegrams: Premier Li Peng, Beijing, China

Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Minister of Public Security:

TAO Siju Buzhang

Gong'anbu

14 Dongchang'anlu

Beijingshi 100741

People's Republic of China

Telegrams: Minister Tao Siju, Beijing, China

Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN

Faxes: + 861 512 1176

Salutation: Your Excellency

3) President of the Xizang Autonomous Regional People's Government:

Gyaltsen Norbu Zhuxi

Xizang Zizhiqu Renmin Zhengfu

1 Kang'andonglu

Lasashi 850000

Xizang Zizhiqu

Salutation: Dear President

People's Republic of China

Telegrams: President Gyaltzen Norbu, Lasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, China

Telexes: 68014 FAOLT CN or 68007 PGVMT CN

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Secretary of the Xizang Autonomous Regional Party Committee:

CHEN Kuiyuan Shuji

Zhonggong Xizang Zizhiqu Weiyuanhui

Lasashi

Xizang Zizhiqu

People's Republic of China

2) Chairman of the Xizang Autonomous Regional People's Congress Standing Committee:

RAIDI Zhuren

Xizang Zizhiqu Renmin Daibiao Dahui

Changwu Weiyuanhui

Lasashi

Xizang Zizhiqu

People's Republic of China

and to diplomatic representatives of China accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 July 1993.