

EXTERNAL

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Fear of torture/ill-treatment

28 July 1997

**BHUTAN**Tempa Rabgye (29)

**Kinzang Dorji (37)**

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Amnesty International fears that two religious teachers recently arrested by the Royal Bhutan Police (RBP) are at risk of torture or ill-treatment while in police custody.

Tempa Rabgye, a 29-year-old religious teacher from Gomdar Shugang Monastery, Samdrup Jonkhar district, eastern Bhutan, was arrested by RBP officers on 26 July 1997 in Samdrup Jonkhar town and reportedly taken into custody at Samdrup Jonkhar police station.

Kinzang Dorji, a 37-year-old religious teacher from Kheri Gomba Monastery, Pema Gatshel district, eastern Bhutan, was also arrested by RBP officers on 27 July in Pema Gatshel and reportedly also taken into custody at Samdrup Jonkhar police station.

They are yet to be charged with any offence and they have not been given access to a *jabmi*, a legal adviser, or their families.

Tempa Rabgye and Kinzang Dorji are reported to be members of the Druk National Congress (DNC), a political organization set up in exile in Nepal. Allegedly, they are also supporters of Rongthong Kunley Dorji, the founder of the DNC, who is currently detained in India where he is opposing his extradition to Bhutan. Amnesty International fears that, as a result of their membership of the DNC and given their association with Rongthong Kunley Dorji, Tempa Rabgye and Kinzang Dorji may be tortured or ill-treated while in police custody possibly to extract from them the names of other DNC supporters.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The fear that Tempa Rabgye and Kinzang Dorji could be tortured or ill-treated in police custody is heightened by recent reports that four members of the DNC were tortured by police shortly after their arrest in eastern Bhutan in early February 1997. According to a relative of one of them, the four men, Taw Tshering, Tshampa Wangchuck, Tshampa Ngawang Tenzin and Chhipon Samten Lhendup, currently detained at Tashi Yangtshi prison, were held completely naked for one week in very low temperatures. Rongthong Kunley Dorji himself was tortured by members of the Royal Bhutan Bodyguards after his arrest, in 1991, on charges of treason.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:**

- expressing concern that Tempa Rabgye and Kinzang Dorji may face torture or ill-treatment while in police custody;
- urging the authorities to grant Tempa Rabgye and Kinzang Dorji immediate access to a *jabmi* and their family;
- asking the grounds on which Tempa Rabgye and Kinzang Dorji are held.

#### **APPEALS TO:**

Lyonpo Dago Tshering  
Minister of Home Affairs  
Ministry of Home Affairs

Royal Government of Bhutan  
Tashichho Dzong  
Thimphu  
Bhutan

**Telegrams: Minister of Home Affairs, Thimphu, Bhutan**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Major Kipchu Nangyal  
Chief of the Special Branch  
Royal Bhutan Police  
Police Headquarters  
Zhilnen Namgyelling  
Thimphu  
Bhutan

**Telegrams: Chief of the Special Branch, Royal Bhutan Police, Thimphu, Bhutan**

**Salutation: Dear Major Nangyal**

and to diplomatic representatives of Bhutan accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 September 1997.