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China: End “outrageous” police violence against Tibetan protesters

Chinese authorities must end excessive use of force against peaceful Tibetan protesters, Amnesty International said after police fired on and injured dozens of demonstrators.

Reports emerged today that Chinese police had opened fire on Tibetan protesters in the town of Diriu in the Tibet Autonomous Region on 6 October, injuring at least 60 people, some seriously. It is unclear if the police used live ammunition or tear gas.

“It is outrageous for the police to start firing on a peaceful gathering. This latest incident shows that the Chinese authorities have done nothing to reign in excessive use of force by their security forces or to increase respect for Tibetans’ right to freedom of peaceful assembly,” said Corinna-Barbara Francis, Amnesty International’s China Researcher.

There have even been reports that some of those seriously injured were denied medical care for several days, at least one of whom is still in very critical condition.

The protesters had gathered to demand the release of a local Tibetan who had been detained on 29 September after speaking out against authorities’ efforts to force local families and monasteries to fly the Chinese flag.

According to the International Campaign for Tibet 40 others were detained on the same day, some of whom remain in detention and the whereabouts of the others remains unknown.

The 6 October incident is the second time in recent months that security forces have fired on a peaceful gathering of Tibetans. On 6 July, in Tawu, Sichuan province, at least ten Tibetans who had gathered to celebrate the Dalai Lama’s birthday were injured.

Since the Tibetan mass protests of 2008 against Chinese rule, the Chinese authorities have stepped up repression in Tibetan areas and imposed intrusive, pervasive, military and security controls on the local population.

The authorities also continue to subject Tibetans to humiliating “patriotic education”, which forces them to denounce the Dalai Lama and express support for the Chinese Communist Party.

“Across the Tibetan region the situation remains tense, and the Chinese authorities are doing nothing to improve it by continuing to deny Tibetans their most basic human rights. The daily harassment and humiliating treatment have to end,” said Corinna-Barbara Francis.