

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Torture/Ill-treatment/Death in Custody

15 June 1994

People's Republic of China
(Tibet Autonomous Region):

Phuntsog Gyaltzen
Phuntsog Yangkyi

Phuntsog Gyaltzen, 36, a Tibetan Buddhist monk and prisoner of conscience, is reported to be seriously ill as a result of sustained beatings in Drapchi Prison in Lhasa, capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

According to unofficial sources in Lhasa, "his body has become helpless", and he suffers from liver and stomach ailments. Despite his state of health he is still forced to undergo prison labour such as digging, emptying toilets and cultivating vegetables.

Phuntsog Gyaltzen, who is serving 12 years' in Drapchi Prison for participating in a Tibetan pro-independence demonstration in 1988, was first beaten by police with electric batons at the time of his arrest. He was initially held in Sangyip Prison and for two months was regularly interrogated under torture. In 1991 he was among a number of prisoners in Drapchi who were reportedly beaten and tortured for taking part in protests following the death in custody in 1990 of Lhakpa Tsering, another political prisoner (see UA 04/91 ASA 17/01/91, 10 January 1991).

According to a separate unofficial report, Phuntsog Yangkyi, a 20 year-old Tibetan nun and prisoner of conscience, also serving her sentence in Drapchi Prison, died in a police hospital in Lhasa on 4 June 1994 reportedly as a result of ill-treatment. It is thought that she died from injuries reportedly sustained after prison guards badly beat her and a number of other nuns for singing nationalist songs on 11 February 1994. She apparently became unconscious after medical staff in the prison gave her medication because she was "speaking uncontrollably", and was transferred to the Police Hospital in Lhasa on 4 June. Her body was cremated two days later, reportedly against the wishes of the family, making it impossible for them to arrange for an independent medical investigation into the causes of her death. Phuntsog Yangkyi was serving a five-year sentence for taking part in a pro-independence demonstration on 3 February 1992.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to Amnesty International's information, political detainees have been routinely tortured in Tibet during the past seven years, and at least four prisoners are known to have died in custody since 1989. There have been consistent reports from Drapchi Prison of political prisoners severely beaten and ill-treated after expressing any dissent. Eye-witnesses and former victims report that detainees have been beaten, given electric shocks and tied with ropes in excruciatingly painful positions, that many have been denied proper medical treatment until their condition became critical, or in some cases not given any treatment at all. Although cases of torture have been publicly reported, there has been no official report of perpetrators having been brought to justice.

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

- urging the authorities to release Phuntsog Gyaltzen immediately and

unconditionally and to ensure that he receives all appropriate medical care;

- expressing concern about the reported circumstances of Phuntsog Yangkyi's death and the immediate cremation of her body without the consent of her family and calling for an impartial investigation with the results made public;

- urging that action be taken by the authorities to investigate the allegations of ill-treatment of prisoners in Drapchi, or to ensure the prisoners' safety and take other appropriate measures, such as the suspension from duty of all officers alleged to have either ordered, used or acquiesced to the use of torture.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice of the People's Republic of China

XIAO Yang Buzhang

Sifabu

Xiaguangli, Beijingshi 100016

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN

(Please forward to Xiao Yang Buzhang)

Faxes: + 861 467 7351

Telephone: (01) 668971

Telegram: Minister of Justice Xiao Yang, Beijing, China

Salutation: Your Excellency

Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate of the People's Republic of China

ZHANG Siqing Jianchazhang

Zuigao Renmin Jianchayuan

147 Beiheyuan Dajie

Donganmen, Dongchengqu

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(Please forward to Zhang Siqing Jianchazhang)

Faxes: + 861 512 6655 ext.1053

Telegram: Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate Zhang Siqing, Beijing, China

Salutation: Dear Procurator-General

President of the Xizang Autonomous Regional People's Government

Gyaltzen Norbu Zhuxi

Xizang Zizhiqu Renmin Zhengfu

1 Kang'angdonglu

Lasashi 850000

Xizang Zizhiqu

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 68014 FAOLT CN or 68007 PGVMT CN

Salutation: Dear President

Telegram: President of the Regional People's Government Gyaltzen Norbu, Lasa, Xizang Autonomous Region, China

Director of Drapchi Prison

Jianyuzhang

Xizang Zizhiqu Di Yi Jianyu

Lasashi 850000

Xizang Zizhiqu
People's Republic of China

**Telegram: Prison Director, Tibet Autonomous Region Prison No. 1, Lasa, Xizang
Autonomous Region, China**

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 July 1994.