

1 December 1998

Further information on 210/98 (ASA 17/25/98, 24 July 1998) and follow-up (ASA 17/34/98, 16 October 1998) - Torture and ill-treatment / Fear for safety

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Ngawang Sungrab, aged 26, monk from Drepung monastery,
Gyaltzen Choephel, aged 33, layman from Lhasa
Ngawang Sangdrol (f), aged 24, nun from Garu nunnery
Ngawang Choezom (f), aged 26, nun from Chubsang nunnery
Ngawang Tenzin (f), aged 30, nun from Gyadrag nunnery
Tanak Jigme Sangpo, aged 70, teacher
Choekyi Wangmo (f), aged 24, nun from Shar Bumpa nunnery
Tashi Lhamo (f), aged 24, nun from Nyemo county
Dekyi Yangzom (f), aged 21, nun from Nyemo county
Khedron Yonten (f), age not known, nun from Nyemo county
Ngawang Choekyi (f), aged 31, nun from Toelun Nyen nunnery

New name: Phuntsog Pema (f), aged 23, from Michungri nunnery

Ngawang Sangdrol, Ngawang Choezom and possibly a third nun, Phuntsog Pema, are reported to be in an extremely poor physical condition having suffered severe beatings by prison officials on several occasions over the past few months. They are all currently detained in Drapchi prison in Tibet.

After the violent suppression of prisoner protests in Drapchi prison on 1 and 4 May 1998, Ngawang Sangdrol and Ngawang Choezom were both reported to have been subjected to harsh interrogation, badly ill-treated and placed in solitary confinement. Since May both nuns have reportedly suffered further severe beatings and other appalling physical brutality on several occasions. They are both believed to be held in solitary confinement.

There are unconfirmed reports that a third nun, Phuntsog Pema, is also reported to be in a very poor condition after being severely beaten and is also believed to be held in solitary confinement. Phuntsog Pema's sentence was due to expire in October 1997 and her continued detention in Drapchi prison has not been explained. Confirmation of her release at the end of her sentence was given to a Norwegian delegation, including the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, King and Queen, who visited China in October 1997.

Ngawang Sangdrol, Ngawang Choezom and Phuntsog Pema are reported to have been involved in further political protests in Drapchi prison since those of May. This is believed to be the reason for their continuing ill-treatment and detention in solitary confinement. Ngawang Sangdrol appears to have been identified as a "ring-leader" by the authorities and to have been singled out for particularly harsh treatment.

Unofficial reports received by the independent news service the Tibet Information Network indicate that there is serious concern for the continued survival of the three nuns.

There have also been additional reports of the deaths of at least five nuns, Ngawang Choekyi, Choekyi Wangmo, Tashi Lhamo, Dekyi Yangzom and Khedron Yonten on 7 June 1998 while each was held in solitary confinement.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/express/airmail letters in English, Tibetan or Chinese or in your own language:

- demanding an immediate end to the brutal ill-treatment of prisoners in Drapchi prison including Ngawang Sangdrol, Ngawang Choezom and Phuntsog Pema;
- urging that prisoners immediately receive full and appropriate medical treatment;
- continuing to urge the Chinese authorities to conduct a full and impartial investigation into the events of 1 and 4 May 1998 in Drapchi prison and all subsequent ill-treatment of prisoners;
- urging a full and impartial investigation into the deaths in custody of five nuns while held in solitary confinement;
- continue to put pressure on your own governments, particularly those within the European Union, to follow-up on the work many have already been doing for Ngawang Sangdrol and other prisoners in Drapchi prison.

APPEALS TO:

President of the People's Republic of China

JIANG Zemin, Guojia Zhuxi, Beijingshi, People's Republic of China

Telegram: President Jiang Zemin, Beijing, People's Republic of China

Salutation: Your Excellency

Chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Regional People's Government

Legchog, Zhuren, Xizang Zizhiqu Renmin Zhengfu, 1 Kang'angdonglu, Lasashi 850000, Xizang Zizhiqu, People's Republic of China

Telexes: 68014 FAoLT CN or 68007 PGVMT CN

Telegram: Chairman, Regional People's Government, Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China

Salutation: Dear Chairman

COPIES TO:

Prison Governor, Drapchi Prison/Tibetan Autonomous Regional Prison No.1

Jianyuzhang, Xizang Di Yi Jianyu, Lasashi 850003, Xizang Zizhiqu, People's Republic of China

and to diplomatic representatives of People's Republic of China accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 January 1999.