

**AI INDEX: ASA 17/59/96**  
**20 MAY 1996 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

CHINA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNS VIOLENT CRACKDOWN IN TIBET

Amnesty International today condemned a violent crackdown by Chinese officials in Tibet which has reportedly resulted in the shooting and serious injury of up to 80 buddhist nuns, monks and others. Those injured were protesting against a ban on displaying pictures of the Dalai Lama.

“It’s appalling that people have been shot and severely beaten merely for displaying pictures of their spiritual leader,” Amnesty International said. “Yet again, the Chinese authorities have shown contempt for the Tibetan people’s human rights of freedom of religion and peaceful expression.”

On 7 May, three monks from Ganden monastery, east of Lhasa, were shot and wounded by police, some reports say that two of them were killed. A fourth is in a serious condition after being beaten. On 14 May two truckloads of seriously injured people arrived at a hospital in Lhasa with a police escort. Both incidents are thought to be related to the increasing tension in Tibet since the authorities began to enforce a ban on the display of pictures of the Dalai Lama in monasteries, shops and schools. Other monasteries are reported to have been closed, stopping the public entering or monks leaving without permission, in order to prevent unrest spreading.

An eyewitness, Takeo Fujimoto, who saw two truckloads of injured people arrive at Lhasa’s main hospital on 14 May said: “more than half were young nuns, all of them very, very young, maybe teenagers, and one was a young girl who had been beaten in the face. It was unbelievable.”

Amnesty International is urging the Chinese authorities to immediately release anyone detained for peacefully expressing their beliefs and remove the ban on displaying pictures of the Dalai Lama.

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