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@123 political arrests in Tibet in three months

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At least 123 people, including 50 nuns and 68 monks, were reportedly arrested in connection with peaceful pro-independence activities in Tibet during the first quarter of 1995. Almost every year, large numbers of people are arrested in relation to pro-independence demonstrations marking the anniversary of a failed Tibetan uprising on 10 March 1959. However, in 1995, more arrests were made during the first three months of the year than during the whole of 1994.

In rural areas such as Penpo Lhundrup county and Medro Gongkar county, many arrests occurred during police raids carried out on monasteries after monks and nuns from the monasteries were arrested for demonstrating. Government "work teams" were sent to these monasteries to persuade monks and nuns not to take part in pro-independence activities and to implement regulations issued in 1994 limiting the number of monks and nuns. As a result, dozens of unregistered monks and nuns, including novices, were expelled. Some of the police raids were met with violent resistance.

In Lhasa, 20-year-old **Pasang** and 22-year-old **Ngodrup**, monks from the Jokhang, Tibet's main temple, were arrested on 8 January 1995. They were subsequently detained in Gutsa Detention Centre in Lhasa for three days, and were reportedly severely beaten before being released. No explanation was given for their arrest or detention. One source indicates that Pasang "was beaten to such an extent that he could not stand up and had severe back pain". The two monks are said to have been threatened by the police with further punishment if they reported what had happened.

At least 39 other people, including 31 nuns and 8 monks, were reportedly arrested in Lhasa in February and March 1995 for taking part in peaceful pro-independence demonstrations in Lhasa.

On 2 or 3 February, five nuns from Chubsang nunnery, near Lhasa, are said to have staged a brief pro-independence protest on the Barkor. According to one source, **Ngawang Tsering, Pema,**

Sangmo, Yangdon and Penpa, all from Medro Gongkar county, were arrested and driven away in a truck by paramilitary police and "even shouted bravely many times from inside the vehicle".

On 3 February 1995, five monks wearing lay clothes are reported to have shouted slogans in the Barkor before being arrested.

Five nuns were arrested on 8 February 1995 after staging a protest near the Jokhang temple. According to one source, they were **Khetsul** and **Yeshi Pema**, from Lhundrup county, and **Ngawang Drolzer** and **Gyaltzen Wangmo**, from Lhokha. The fifth is believed to be a nun from Nyethang. All five of them were reportedly badly beaten during arrest.

On 16 February 1995, five other nuns from Chubsang Nunnery were reportedly arrested for staging a pro-independence demonstration in Lhasa. According to sources, two or three other nuns were arrested while demonstrating on 25 February 1995. 14 further nuns were reported to have been arrested in demonstrations in Lhasa on 17 and 28 February 1995.

About 20 monks and laymen are reported to have staged a demonstration on 17 March 1995, chanting pro-independence slogans around the main temple in Lhasa. The demonstration is reported to have been quickly broken up by plainclothes police and uniformed security men. Three demonstrators, believed to be monks, were reportedly arrested and beaten.

Protests and arrests of monks from Kagyupa monasteries

In January 1995, five monks fled from Tsurphu monastery, 50 kilometres north-west of Lhasa, after they were accused of putting up "dissident posters". According to reports, four of them were arrested in Shigatse as they tried to escape to India and are being held in Toelung county prison. The fifth is believed to have escaped. Three of the detainees were senior monks at Tsurphu, including **Kyigen**, the main chant master of the monastery. The monks are said to have left letters in their room at the monastery accusing the Chinese authorities of taking advantage of the Karmapa¹ and protesting against a current campaign by the Chinese authorities against the Dalai Lama.

Until recently monks and nuns affiliated to Kagyupa school had avoided taking part in any pro-independence activities but many were reported to have been arrested for such activities during the first three months of 1995.

In a series of pro-independence protests at least 14 people were arrested in Medro Gongkar county during the first three months of 1995.

In early January 1995, a peaceful pro-independence protest was reportedly staged by monks at the monastery of Yamure, in Medro Gongkar county, 99 kilometres east of Lhasa. The protest, sparked off by officials demanding that photographs of the Dalai Lama be banned, led to a raid on the

¹ The Karmapa is the 11-year-old leader of the Kagyupa school of Tibetan Buddhism. In 1991 he was recognised as an incarnation by the Chinese authorities, and was quoted by the official *Xinhua* news agency as saying that he was a patriotic lama who wanted to unite the motherland.

monastery by over 100 troops and four people were arrested. On 29 March 1995, Yamure monastery was visited by local officials, accompanied by a military escort, who announced that the abbot and one of the teachers had been expelled from the monastery for "political reasons". This is the first such expulsion in recent years. Twenty-four unregistered novices were also expelled.

Eight Tibetans, including three monks from Kagyupa monastery, were arrested on 28 January 1994 in Katsel, a village 65 kilometres north-east of Lhasa in Medro Gongkar county, after pro-independence posters were put up and dissident books were found in some of the monk's rooms.

This was followed, on 5 February 1995, by a demonstration staged by nuns from Terdrom nunnery, about 120 kilometres north-east of Lhasa in Medro Gongkar county, which led to two further arrests.

In Nyemo county, 80 kilometres west of Lhasa, four nuns from Donpar nunnery are said to have been arrested after staging a demonstration on, or around, 5 February 1995.

60 arrests in Penpo Lhundrup county

February 1995 was marked by several pro-independence demonstrations involving monks and nuns from Penpo Lhundrup county monasteries and nunneries, and led to at least 60 arrests.

During February 1995, seven monks from the Kagyupa monastery of Taglung, 65 kilometres north of Lhasa, and its affiliate sub-monastery Barilbu, in Penpo Lhundrup county, were reportedly arrested. The monks had travelled to Lhasa to stage their protest in two groups, one group demonstrating on or around 11 February 1995 and the second on 15 February 1995. On 17 February 1995, armed police surrounded Taglung monastery and issued a warning that the monastery would be closed if any further protest were staged. Some sources indicate that there was some resistance and that a number of monks were severely injured.

Around 20 February 1995 a raid was carried out by armed police at Gyab-drag nunnery, 25 kilometres south of Taglung, after 13 nuns were arrested for staging a protest in Lhasa. According to reports from Gyab-drag, the families of the detainees were asked by the police to pay 2,000 yuan (about 3 years' average income) to secure the release of each nun. It is not known whether the money was paid.

According to sources, **Thongon**, a monk from Nalanda monastery in Penpo Lhundrup county, was arrested in a nearby market town on or just before 25 February 1995 because he was wearing a pro-independence badge. Other monks protested strongly at the arrest, reportedly staging a protest march to the town.

A number of police were injured when they attempted to raid the Nalanda monastery, on or around 28 February 1995, but were forced back by stones thrown by the monks. A second raid was carried out by an estimated 70 military soldiers, leading to further resistance from the monks. A Tibetan source said "the monks threw stones at them and many of the paramilitary police were injured. Later, tear gas shells were fired into the monastery and police beat up all the monks inside the monastery".

A total of at least 40 Nalanda monks were arrested as a result of these events, the largest number of arrests from a single monastery in recent years. Among the detainees were the monastery's chant-master, the accountant, the discipline-master and other senior monastic officials. By 9 March 1995 the monks had been transferred from Lhundrup county Detention Centre to Sangyip Detention Centre in Lhasa.

Although some monks reportedly took part in violence during the raid, it is believed that a number of those arrested did not, and are prisoners of conscience. An unofficial source said that senior monks at Nalanda had been planning to carry out a demonstration in Lhasa on 16 March 1995, and had prepared wooden blocks for printing pro-independence leaflets, several of which were discovered by police after the raid. During a search of the monastery, pictures of which were broadcast on Tibetan television (the first time such a search has been shown), police discovered two large Tibetan flags, which have been outlawed by the Chinese authorities.

After the raid a "re-education" team was sent to Nalanda monastery and 64 monks were reportedly expelled. According to sources, by the middle of March "re-education" teams had been sent to all monasteries and nunneries in Penpo Lhundrup county and had issued warnings that monasteries would be closed down in the event of further protests.

Amnesty International is concerned that the majority of those arrested in Tibet in January, February and March 1994, are believed to be prisoners of conscience arrested for taking part in small-scale peaceful demonstrations or for distributing pro-independence material, such as leaflets and badges, and should be released immediately and unconditionally. Amnesty International urges the Chinese authorities to promptly charge all those allegedly involved in violence during police raids on monasteries with a recognizably criminal offence in accordance with international standards and ensure they have open and fair trials. The circumstances in which **Pasang** and **Ngodrup**, monks from Jokhang Monastery, were arrested and beaten at Gutsa Detention Centre in Lhasa should be fully investigated, and the results published.

KEYWORDS: ARBITRARY ARREST1 / RELIGIOUS OFFICIALS - BUDDHIST1 / PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE1 / TORTURE/ILL-TREATMENT / EXTORTION / POLITICAL ACTIVISTS / WOMEN / POLICE / DEMONSTRATIONS /

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Please send telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters either in English or in your own language,

- ◆ *urging that **Kyigen** and the three others monks from Tsurphu Monastery currently detained in Toelung county prison, **Ngawang Tsering, Pema, Sangmo, Yangdon, Penpa**, nuns from Chubsang Nunnery, **Khetsul and Yeshe Pema**, from Lhundrup county, **Ngawang Drolzer and Gyaltzen Wangmo** from Lhokha, **Thongon** from Nalanda Monastery and all those of the 123 people who were arrested during the first quarter of 1995 for peacefully advocating Tibetan independence, should be immediately and unconditionally released;*
- ◆ *urging that those allegedly involved in violence during police raids on monasteries should be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence in accordance with international standards and given an open and fair trial;*
- ◆ *asking for the circumstances in which **Pasang** and **Ngodrup**, monks from Jokhang Monastery, were arrested and beaten at Gutsa Detention Centre in Lhasa to be fully investigated, and the results published.*

Please send appeals to:

President, Tibet Autonomous Regional People's Government

Gyaltzen Norbu Zhuxi

Telexes: 68014 FAOLT CN or 68007 PGVMT CN

Xizang Zizhiqu Renmin Zhengfu

Salutation: Dear President

1 Kang'andonglu

Lasashi 850000

Xizang Zizhiqu

People's Republic of China

Director, Tibet Autonomous Regional Department of Public Security

Baima Doji Tingzhang

Salutation: Dear Director

Gong'anting

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Xizang Zizhiqu

People's Republic of China

Director, Tibet Autonomous Regional Commission of Religious Affairs

Yuga Zhuren

Salutation: Dear Director

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