

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 148/91 Arbitrary Detention/Legal Concern

1 May 1991

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA:  
(Tibet Autonomous Region)

Ngawang Tsoepa  
Kelsang Gyentsen  
Ngawang Tsundu  
Ngawang Legshey  
Ngawang Namgyal

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The five people named above are monks from Dhing-gar, a Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Toelung Dechen, a district of Lhasa, capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region. They were reportedly detained in the afternoon of 17 March 1991, when they attempted to unfurl a Tibetan nationalist banner at the start of a demonstration on the Barkor, a pilgrimage path in central Lhasa. According to accounts of the attempted demonstration by witnesses on the scene, the five monks started to shout slogans in favour of Tibetan independence from China and were then apprehended. A witness alleged the monks were beaten by officers of the Public Security Bureau, and that one of the monks appears to have had his hand broken. Some accounts indicate that up to three other people, including a lay Tibetan, may have been detained at the same time. The five monks are not known to have been charged with any criminal offence or to have been released. Under Chinese law and regulations, prisoners may be held without trial for "re-education through labour" for up to four years.

Amnesty International is concerned that the five monks named above, and possibly other people arrested with them, may be detained without charge and may be unable to challenge the legality of their detention in a court of law. It is also concerned they may be prisoners of conscience held for their peaceful advocacy of Tibetan independence from China. Amnesty International calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to release the five monks unless they have been charged with recognizably criminal offences and are to be tried in accordance with international standards for fair trial.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hundreds of Tibetans have been detained in Tibet over the past two years in connection with political activities. Many of those still held, sometimes without charge or trial, are prisoners of conscience imprisoned solely for their peaceful advocacy of Tibetan independence from China. Dozens of Buddhist monks and nuns are among those detainees.

Buddhist monasteries and nunneries have long been centres of dissident activities in Tibet. Some major monasteries near Lhasa were sealed off by security forces in early March 1991 for a period which coincided with a major Buddhist festival which, in 1988 and 1989 had been the occasion of major demonstrations and violent incidents between Tibetans and police.

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/faxes and airmail letters:

- urging that the whereabouts and present situation of all those detained in connection with the 17 March 1991 demonstration be made public, including that of the five monks named above;

- urging that all those detained in connection with the 17 March 1991 demonstration be released without delay unless they have been charged with

a recognizably criminal offence and are to be tried promptly in accordance with international standards for fair trial;

- expressing concern at allegations that the monks may have been beaten at the time of their arrest, and urging that an independent inquiry be carried out into the circumstances in which the five monks were apprehended, that its finding be made public and that appropriate sanctions be taken against any members of the security forces found responsible for ill-treatment.

**APPEALS TO:**

**Tibet Autonomous Region President:**

**Gyaincain Norbu** Zhuxi  
Xizang Zizhiqu Renmin Zhengfu  
Lasashi  
Xizang Zangzu Zizhiqu  
People's Republic of China

**Regional Chief Procurator:**

**YANG Youcai** Jianchazhang  
Xizang Zizhiqu Renmin Jianchayuan  
Lasashi  
Xizang Zangzu Zizhiqu  
People's Republic of China

**Telexes for both officials:** 68014 FAOLT CN;  
68007 PGVMT CN

**Supreme People's Procurator:**

**LIU Fuzhi** Jianchazhang  
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**Telexes:** 210070 FMPC CN; 22478 MFERT CN  
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and to the office of the Xinhua news agency and diplomatic representatives of the PRC in your country

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 June 1991.