

PUBLIC

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Fear of torture and other ill-treatment

CHINA

Samten (m), aged 17, Lungkar Monastery, Qinghai Province
Trulku Tenpa Rigsang, (m), aged 26, Lungkar Monastery, Qinghai Province
Gelek Pel (m) aged 32 Lungkar Monastery, Qinghai Province
Lobsang (m) aged 15, Onpo Monastery, Sichuan Province
Lobsang Thukjey (m), aged 19 Onpo Monastery, Sichuan Province
Tsultrim Palden (m), aged 20 Onpo Monastery, Sichuan Province
Lobsher (m), aged 20 Onpo Monastery, Sichuan Province
Phurden, (m), aged 22 Onpo Monastery, Sichuan Province
Thupdon (m), aged 24 Onpo Monastery, Sichuan Province
Lobsang Ngodup (m), aged 29 Onpo Monastery, Sichuan Province
Lodoe (m), aged 30 Onpo Monastery, Sichuan Province
Thupwang (m), aged 30, Darthang Monastery
Pema Garwang (m), aged 30, Darthang Monastery
Tsegjam (m), aged 22, Kashi Monastery
Soepa (m), aged 30, Mangye Monastery

According to information published by the Tibetan Centre on Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), 15 Tibetan monks were detained on 10 March for staging a peaceful demonstration in Barkhor, Lhasa, the capital of Tibetan Autonomous Region. There is no information of their current whereabouts or of any charges brought against them. They are at high risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

On Monday 10 March hundreds of monks began a march from Drepung Monastery towards Barkhor. Another group, which included the 15 monks now in detention, began their march from Sera Monastery, but were soon detained. The monks had been demanding that the government ease a "patriotic re-education" campaign which forces them to denounce the Dalai Lama and subjects them to government propaganda.

Protests began in other monasteries in support of those detained. Demonstrations also involving lay people then followed across Lhasa, in other parts of Tibet and in areas of the neighbouring provinces of Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan with large populations of Tibetans. On Friday the protests became violent, with some protesters specifically targeting and setting fire to Chinese-owned businesses and attacking people from other ethnic groups.

The Chinese authorities urged the protesters to give themselves in by Monday 17 March at midnight, Beijing Time, and promised that those who did would be treated leniently. As of today, the streets of Lhasa were reported to be largely quiet and empty.

Police and soldiers are reported to be conducting house to house sweeps in Lhasa. Some eyewitnesses have reported individuals being dragged from their homes. There continue to be reports of unrest in neighbouring Sichuan and Gansu provinces. There are also reports that some Chinese police and soldiers have used excessive force, including lethal force, against Tibetan demonstrators in Lhasa and elsewhere. With large numbers of troops now deployed in the region further human rights violations may be committed.

The Chinese authorities have imposed a near-total block on information leaving Tibet and surrounding areas. Permits for journalists to enter Tibet were stopped from 12 March. Foreign journalists have been barred or removed from districts in Gansu, Sichuan and Qinghai provinces, where the unrest has spread.

The Chinese government has the right and duty to defend all individuals and property from violence. At the same time international law requires that the authorities handle such crises in ways that uphold fundamental human rights and the principles of necessity and proportionality in the use of force. For example, firearms should only be discharged as a last resort and when lives are at risk.

TCHRD has obtained pictures of fourteen of the detained monks. The portraits are on their website at: <http://www.tchrd.org/press/2008/p001.html>.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible in English, Chinese or your own language:

- urge the authorities to release the 15 monks named above, as well as all others detained for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- urge the authorities to fully account for all those detained during the demonstrations, ensuring they are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, have access to lawyers and medical care, are brought promptly before an independent court and are able to challenge their detention;
- ensure that those prosecuted are charged with internationally recognizable offences and tried in proceedings which meet international fair trial standards;
- allow full and unimpeded access to Tibet and other Tibetan areas to journalists and other independent observers
- allow independent UN investigation into the events of the last week, including full access to scenes of confrontation, eye-witnesses, and detainees, and allow similar access to independent observers, including journalists and human rights NGOs.

APPEALS TO:

President of the People's Republic of China
HU Jintao Guojia Zhuxi
The State Council General Office
2 Fuyoujie, Xichengqu
Beijingshi 100017, People's Republic of China
Salutation: Your Excellency

Chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Regional People's Government

Qiangba PUNCOG Zhuren
Xizang Zizhiqu Renmin Zhengfu
1 Kang'angdonglu
Lasashi 850000, Xizang Zizhiqu, People's Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Chairman

Minister of Public Security of the People's Republic of China

MENG Jianzhu Buzhang
Gong'anbu
14 Dongchang'anjie
Dongchengqu, Beijingshi 100741, People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 63099216 (it may be difficult to get through, please keep trying)
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Mayor of Lasa Municipal People's Government Tibet Autonomous Region

LOBSANG Gyaincain Shizhang
Lasashi Zizhiqu Renmin Zhengfu
16 Jinjulu, Lasashi 850000, Xizang Zizhiqu, People's Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Mayor

and to diplomatic representatives of China accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 29 April 2008.