

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PRESS RELEASE

Index: PRE 01/535/2011
18 October 2011

China: 'New level of desperation' as Tibetans set themselves on fire

In reaction to news that a 20 year old Tibetan nun, Tenzin Wangmo, set herself on fire and died on Monday, near Kirti monastery in Ngaba County, Sichuan province, Amnesty International said:

"This is the ninth self-immolation in recent months by ethnic Tibetans and indicates a new level of desperation on the part of Tibetans against the Chinese government's repression of their culture and religious freedom," said Sam Zarifi, Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific Director.

"The Chinese authorities should heed the demands of Tibetans to freely practice their religion and enjoy their culture. Instead they have resorted to heavy-handed response that can only deepen and further fuel resentments." said Sam Zarifi.

The Chinese government has responded to protests through mass arrests of people including 300 Kirti monastery monks, enforced disappearances, imprisonment, "patriotic re-education" of monks, and possible killings by the security forces.

"The heavy security presence in these regions contributes to an already tense climate. Those imprisoned for their peaceful protest must be released immediately," said Sam Zarifi. Kirti monastery is in Aba (Ngaba) County in an ethnic Tibetan area of Sichuan province, which has seen repeated protests against denial of their religious and cultural rights. Seven monks and former monks from Kirti monastery have set themselves on fire in recent months. An eighth monk from Nyitse monastery set himself on fire in Ganzi (Kardze) County also in Sichuan province.

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