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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 May 2011]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Human rights situation in the People's Republic of China, with special regards to the Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures

The severe repression of freedom of speech, religion, association, and movement in all parts of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures continues. The Chinese authorities have further intensified their control over monastic institutions, in particular Kirti Monastery in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba), Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), Sichuan province after the March 2008 protests.

Ven. Phuntsok, aged 20 of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), Sichuan province, self-immolated on 16 March, 2011, to protest against the crackdown in the Ngaba area and government policies. He died in hospital next morning.

March 16 was the third anniversary of a major demonstration at Kirti in 2008 during which at least 10 Tibetans were shot dead. Ven. Phuntsok immolated himself around 4 pm at the main market in Ngaba County near the monastery and shouted the slogan "Long Live the Dalai Lama".

The police extinguished the flame and started beating him. Tibetan monks and laypeople intervened and managed to take Ven. Phuntsok away from the police and back to Kirti monastery nearby.

Subsequently, over 1,000 Tibetans - monks and laymen - took to the streets and marched half a mile shouting slogans to express their anger.

A large number of Chinese security forces were called in to disperse the Tibetans. Electric batons were used indiscriminately to beat the Tibetans. Many Tibetans were taken into police custody and monks seen on the street were arrested.

Since then the security forces have cordoned off the monastery and huge armed police and army stationed near the monastery.

Chinese authorities continue to arbitrarily detained Tibetans including monks and nuns. Many of them remain missing. On the night of 21 April 2011, over 300 monks from Kirti Monastery were taken away on army trucks. A group of lay Tibetan people – mainly in their sixties or older had been standing vigil at the monastery gate were beaten by police. Arms and legs were broken. The fate of the monks taken away remains unknown.

The 60-year-old Mr. Dhonkho of Thawa Ghongma and a 65-year-old Mrs. Sherkyi of the Rako Tsang house Chashang died at Kirti when they together with other Tibetans tried to prevent the security forces from taking away the monks from the monastery.

Two of them were among 200 Tibetan civilians, mostly senior citizens who were camping near a road close to the monastery since 12 April despite being threatened by Chinese soldiers to leave.

A group of 70-80 Tibetans from the neighbouring Golog prefecture went to Ngaba in about 40 vehicles to show support for relatives enrolled as monks in the monastery. When they had travelled as far as the Gyatoe sub-district in Upper Ngaba, Chinese security forces detained them.

Many of those Tibetans come from Chigdril County and were worried about their relatives at Kirti monastery. They have received no information about their present condition. By 29 April, authorities in Chigdril had returned the group to their home county.

The Chinese government has installed CCTV cameras in and outside of the monastery, and policemen guard each monk's rooms. Chinese authorities raised the presence of troops in

areas of Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan provinces where Tibetans live in the backdrop of the ongoing repression at Kirti Monastery and surrounding areas in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba).

A Tibetan source said that 5 more trucks were brought at the monastery on 22 April with their license plates and body covered. Security forces were reported to be watching and searching the monastery. Some are dressed in civilian clothes.

The monastery is virtually under lockdown with a large presence of security forces both inside and outside the monastery.

Chinese law guarantees freedom of speech and of the press. However, the government continued to control print, broadcast, and electronic media tightly. It increased censorship of the press and the Internet during sensitive anniversaries.

Reuters quoted the notice issued by the Provincial authority dated 21 April that "Foreigners already in the aforementioned areas are to be urged to leave."

Starting from March 20, over 2,500 monks at Kirti Monastery have been put through "patriotic education" by 800 Chinese party officials from Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) and Zoege (Chinese: Ruo'ergai) counties of Ngaba Prefecture in Sichuan Province. The monks in the monastery were divided into four groups and the armed police and cadres also separated into four work teams, supervising every single person, meticulously registering every monk.

The monastery is unable to hold any normal Buddhist classes. The monks are unable to meditate or engage in religious practices.

It was not clear whether the armed police blockade of the monastery had been lifted or not. The so-called patriotic education campaign to blaspheme the Dalai Lama was reported to be continuing.

A video recording of heavy China's security presence at the Kirti Monastery in Ngaba was posted on the website of the Voice of America's Tibetan service. The footage disputes the Chinese Foreign Ministry's 19 April claim that the situation there was "normal".

The video shows heavy security patrolling around Kirti monastery. It also shows the first footage of the 20-year-old monk Phuntsok who self-immolated on 16 March. One segment of the video shows Phuntsok sitting in a car still alive but state of shock with severe burns covering his body and his hair burned off. He died 17 March morning due to the severity of the burns as well as the beating by the police.

Two Kirti Monastery monks had been jailed for three years around 2 May by the Ngaba County court. Lobsang Dhargay, 31, was jailed for his involvement in the protest in Lhasa in March 2008 with other monks of Drepung Monastery where he had enrolled in 2003 and deported back to Ngaba County. However, he remained under strict surveillance of the Ngaba police. On 11 April 2011 he was re-arrested from his room in the monastery and taken away.

Kunchok Tsultrim, 33, was reported to be Kirti monastery's storekeeper. On 16 March he was arrested from the monastery. The reason for their imprisonment is still unknown.

Lobsang Tsepa, a monk of Kirti Monastery was arrested on 25 March in Beijing. He was studying at Beijing's Central University for Nationalities. Police in Dege County of Sichuan Province arrested Jampa Tso, a 28-year-old Tibetan Buddhist nun on 16 April, after she shouted slogans calling for freedom and also distributed leaflets. Jampa Tso was from Badak Phuntsok Choeling Nunnery in neighbouring Draggo (Chinese: Luhuo) County. But the protest took place on a bridge leading to the Dege county market.

The nun's family at Chuwa Village in Draggo County was informed about the arrest but not allowed to meet with her.

Two monks were imprisoned up to three years in Jomda (Chinese: Jiangda) County of Chamdo Prefecture for protesting against Chinese government takeover of land attached to their monastery.

Following a decision in December 2009 by the local authorities to take over a compound of the monastery, the monks of Jophu Monastery and local Tibetans staged a protest insisting that the land should remain with the monastery. Tulku Jangchub, 25, was held in December 2009 for leading the protest and the monk Pesang was held in January 2011.

Both were sentenced in March 2011 – Jangchub to three years and Pesang to two and half years.

Pesang was stated to be currently hospitalized after he was tortured in prison. He was transferred to the Powo Tramo Prison, which is in Nyingtri Prefecture.

In May 1995 the Dalai Lama recognized Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the 11th reincarnation of the Panchen Lama. At the age of 6, he and his family went missing since the Chinese authorities abducted them in May 1995.

On 8 April 2011 the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances issued a Press Statement expressed serious concern at the recent wave of enforced disappearances that allegedly took place over the last few months including lawyers Teng Biao, Tang Jitian, Jiang Tianyong, and Tang Jingling. The working group added it is also concerned by several long-running cases of reported disappearances, including a case from 1995 involving six-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, also known as the 11th Panchen Lama.

The experts called on China to release all those who have been forcibly disappeared and to provide information on the fate and whereabouts of people who have allegedly disappeared.

Society for Threatened Peoples would like to urge the government of the People's Republic of China:

1. To immediately release all those nearly 300 monks of Ngaba Kirti Monastery who had been arrested on 21 April 2010 and provide information of their whereabouts;
2. To immediately end the ongoing patriotic re-education campaign and withdraw Chinese security forces stationed in and around Kirti Monastery;
3. To provide independent information and access to Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama and his family, who have not been seen publicly since May 1995;
4. To allow free access to international media in and around Ngaba Kirti Monastery;
5. To respect religious freedom of ethnic minorities as guaranteed in its constitution and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.