



Torture in Tibet

**Tibet Watch submission to the Committee Against Torture
February 2015**

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Submission to
the United Nations Committee Against Torture
in advance of the adoption of a List of Issues for the People's Republic of China
at the 54th Session

February 2015



supported by Gu-Chu-Sum and Free Tibet

Tibet Watch works to promote the human rights of the Tibetan people through monitoring, research and advocacy. We are a UK registered charity (no. 1114404) with an office in London and a field office in Dharamsala, India. We believe in the power of bearing witness, the power of truth.

www.tibetwatch.org

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Introduction

This report has been produced by Tibet Watch, with support from Gu-Chu-Sum and Free Tibet, in response to China's fifth periodic report to the United Nations Committee Against Torture (the Committee) regarding China's implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the Convention).

China's report outlines a broad range of legal measures which have been put in place to prevent the use of torture. However, Tibet Watch has been monitoring human rights abuse in Tibet since 2006 and has not noticed any improvements whatsoever in practice. Regardless of what might be stated in law or policy, the reality for Tibetans is still widespread brutality and routine use of torture.

China was last reviewed by the Committee in 2008, just after the Beijing Olympics Games. The award of the Olympic Games to Beijing was accompanied by numerous promises from both the Chinese government and the International Olympic Committee that the Games would generate greater openness and respect for human rights across China. In reality, security was tightened in many areas, especially Tibet, and 2008 was also the year of a mass Tibetan uprising. This was violently suppressed and previous reports from Tibet Watch and Free Tibet detailed a number of the protest incidents - this included eye-witness reports of security forces opening fire on unarmed civilians, lists of people who were arrested and believed to be at risk of torture and some specific examples of torture. For ease of reference, a brief summary of the situation in 2008 is included within the background information.

The substance of this current report focuses on the sustained repression which has been in effect since the 2008 uprising. Tibet Watch has documented a number of deaths in custody; deaths occurring after release but resulting from torture; and deaths which have resulted from the disproportionate use of force, including gunfire, by Chinese security forces against unarmed Tibetan civilians.

A significant number of people were arrested in connection with the 2008 uprising and many more have since been arrested for opposing China's repressive policies in Tibet. Most of those people are either still in prison or under surveillance. Fortunately, some former political prisoners do manage to make the journey into exile following their release. Tibet Watch and Gu-Chu-Sum have carried out interviews with political prisoners in exile and this report includes three testimonies which provide clear evidence of the conditions in Chinese prisons and the continued use of torture against Tibetan political prisoners.

This report also provides details of a number of Tibetans who are currently in detention, some incommunicado, and at risk of torture. It is the hope of all the organisations party to this report that the Commission will be able to obtain information confirming the condition and whereabouts of these prisoners, as well as the charges against them, and also recommend that they receive any necessary medical treatment and visits from their family.

Furthermore, this report provides outline details of the case lodged in Spain against former Chinese leaders on charges which included torture, genocide and crimes against humanity. On the basis that we believe China's behaviour to be incompatible with the aims of the Convention, the contributing organisations request the Committee to look into China's role in instigating potentially unconstitutional changes in Spanish law which led to the case being discontinued and also interfered with the implementation of international law relating to torture.

Finally, this report lists a number of issues which the contributing organisations hope to see included in the List of Issues which the Committee adopts at the forthcoming session.

Contributing organisations

Tibet Watch



Tibet Watch works to promote the human rights of the Tibetan people through human rights monitoring, research and advocacy. We are a UK registered charity, established in 2006, with an office in London, UK, and a field team based in Dharamsala, India. The majority of our staff are Tibetan, with first-hand experience of the occupation.

We document and expose the ongoing human rights abuses in Tibet using a wide range of sources, although our information is primarily based on interviews and witness testimony. We believe that accuracy is vital in our work and all of the information we record is carefully verified and corroborated before being published. We also carry out thematic research and collaborate with academic and NGO partners as appropriate.

We have previously provided evidence to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee Against Torture and engaged in the Universal Periodic Review process. We also provide regular briefings to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Gu-Chu-Sum Movement of Tibet



The Gu-Chu-Sum Movement of Tibet was formed in 1991 by a group of 33 former political prisoners who had escaped into exile in India. Based in Dharamsala, in the north Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, Gu-Chu-Sum is registered with the Indian government and also recognised by the Central Tibetan Administration (Tibetan government-in-exile). The organisation has over 500 members worldwide.

Gu-Chu-Sum provides housing, employment, medical care, education, job training and economic assistance to ex-political prisoners who have journeyed into exile. The organization aims to help ex-political prisoners become self-sufficient. Gu-Chu-Sum also works to increase awareness of repression in Tibet and calls for the Chinese government to respect basic human rights in Tibet. Gu-Chu-Sum publishes a bi-monthly newsletter and a yearly magazine called 'Tibetan Envoy' in both English and Tibetan.

Free Tibet



Free Tibet was established in 1987 and is an NGO based in London, UK. Free Tibet works closely with Tibet Watch and has previously contributed to joint reports to UN committees.

“Our vision is a free Tibet in which Tibetans are able to determine their own future and the human rights of all are respected. Free Tibet campaigns for an end to China's occupation of Tibet and for international recognition of Tibetans' right to freedom. We mobilise active support for the Tibetan cause, champion human rights and challenge those whose actions help sustain the occupation.”

Background

The Beijing Olympics and human rights in Tibet

On 13 July 2001, the Chinese government was triumphant when Beijing won the right to host the 2008 Olympic Games. But the selection of Beijing was controversial, especially in light of China's human rights record both within China itself and in Tibet, which China has occupied since 1950. Upon being awarded the 2008 Olympics, the Chinese government swiftly made a number of promises regarding the promotion of human rights across China for the seven years leading up to the Beijing Olympics, as well as promising freedom of movement and access for the thousands of journalists who would be in China covering the Olympics in Beijing before and during August 2008.

The head of the 2001 Beijing Olympic Games bidding committee, Wang Wei, promised that being awarded the 2008 Games would “enhance all social conditions, including education, health and human rights”¹ in China. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) also claimed that awarding Beijing the Olympics would lead to improvements in human rights across China. “Some people say, because of serious human rights issues, ‘We close the door and say no [to China],’” said Francois Carrard, IOC Executive Director, on 13 July 2001. “The other way is to bet on openness ... we are taking the bet that seven years from now we will see many changes [in China],” he added².

By the end of 2007 it was clear that, despite repeated pledges from the IOC and China that the Games would inevitably lead to major improvements in the field of human rights, the situation in Tibet had actually appreciably worsened. The persistent strengthening of state control over Tibetan Buddhism, together with the increasing marginalisation of Tibetan language, culture and identity represented a blatant refusal by China to live up to its earlier pledges.

Two Tibetans, Dhondup Wangchen and Golog Jigme, decided to make a film documenting the true situation on the ground in Tibet in the run-up to the Olympics. The film, entitled *Leaving Fear Behind*, was based on 35 hours of interview footage of 108 ordinary Tibetans talking about their lives and their country. As one participant explained:

“The situation is very dangerous. China was awarded the Games on the condition that the situation in China and Tibet would improve. They made promises to the whole world to grant freedoms, democracy and other basic human rights. They were only awarded the Games because they made those promises. However, after they were awarded the Games there has been no greater freedoms or democracy and repression is getting stronger and stronger.”³

Leaving Fear Behind was first shown in Beijing on 6 August 2008, two days before the start of the Olympics. Dhondup Wangchen and Golog Jigme had already been detained in March 2008, just days after filming had been completed and the footage secured. On 28 December 2009, Dhondup Wangchen was sentenced to six years in prison for “subversion of state power”. He remained in prison until 5 June 2014, when he was released. He remains under tight surveillance and it has not been possible for Tibet Watch to contact him securely. Golog Jigme, however, managed to escape into exile and his testimony is included within this report.

¹ *Journalists to write whatever they like if Beijing holds 2008 Games*, China Daily, 12 July 2001: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2001-07/12/content_69970.htm

² *Beijing Is Selected as 2008 Host City*, New York Times, 13 July 2001: <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/07/13/sports/13CHIN.html>

³ Participant in *Leaving Fear Behind*

The 2008 uprising and ongoing repression

The years of increasing abuses, almost entirely ignored by the IOC despite its own solemn pledges, created a simmering resentment amongst Tibetans both inside and outside Tibet. Such resentment surfaced dramatically, first in Lhasa and then throughout Tibet, in March 2008.

On 10 March 2008, approximately 300 monks from Drepung monastery and nearby Sera monastery marched towards the Barkhor area in central Lhasa, demanding the release of six monks who had been arrested the previous October. Between 50 and 60 of the monks were arrested at roadblocks created by the police in an attempt to stop the protest from growing and spreading to other parts of the city. Tensions in the city escalated over the next few days as thousands of security forces surrounded the city's major monasteries. On 14 March protests erupted in central Lhasa. After years of violent repression, some Tibetans turned on Chinese residents, while armed Chinese police reacted brutally towards Tibetans.

The uprising quickly spread outside the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) into the Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures in the adjacent Chinese provinces. Monks and nuns staged spontaneous but peaceful demonstrations against years of religious repression by the Chinese regime. These demonstrations were also violently suppressed, leading to further protests. More than 80 Tibetan nuns were detained in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, in Sichuan Province, in May 2008, after a series of peaceful protests. The nuns, several of whom unfurled Tibetan flags in public and called out the name of the Dalai Lama, were protesting against the violent crackdown that had followed the peaceful religious protests in March. Nunneries across Kardze were subsequently subjected to stringent 'patriotic education' campaigns, aimed at coercing the nuns into denouncing the Dalai Lama.

An eye-witness to one of the Kardze protests described the reaction of the Chinese police:

"[Chinese] Police has sealed off the area, but bloodstains were still visible on the street. They said [the bloodstains] belonged to the young man, Sergah. The three [Tibetan] nuns and Sergah were beaten to the point where they couldn't move and then thrown on to a truck as if they were bags of luggage – it is difficult to tell whether they were alive or not."⁴

After investigating the uprisings in March and April 2008, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in Dharamsala, India, confirmed that, to the best of its knowledge, 203 Tibetans had been killed following the Chinese government crackdown on the protests from 10 March-25 April 2008. CTA spokesman, Thupten Samphel, stated that these figures were based on information from six different news sources, including Chinese state media.

"We confirm that the actual figure for the dead is 203, the number of injured is more than 1,000 and the number of those still detained is more than 5,715" he said.⁵

On 23 April 2008, Steven Marshall, Senior Advisor of the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China addressed the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He spoke about human rights in Tibet and the possibilities of "finding a path to peace." Marshall, who has documented human rights in Tibet and China for more than 20 years, made a clear distinction between the March 2008 protests and previous uprisings in Tibet, emphasising that the 2008 protests spread far beyond Lhasa and the TAR and into the Tibetan areas in the Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan. Marshall also noted that,

"...faced with the choice between blaming the protests on the Dalai Lama or acknowledging acute Tibetan dissatisfaction with policies that do not deliver the rights and freedoms under China's constitution and legal system, the Chinese leadership blamed the Dalai Lama".⁶

⁴ International Campaign for Tibet: eye-witness account cited in Tibetan newspaper Bod Kyi Bang Chen, 18 March 2008: <http://www.savetibet.org/more-than-80-nuns-detained-after-peaceful-protests-continue-in-kham/>

⁵ Press Statement, Central Tibetan Administration, 29 April 2008: <http://tibet.net/2008/04/29/press-statement/>

⁶ Steven Marshall is also Prisoner Database Program Director of the US Congressional Executive Commission on China.

According to a 2010 Human Rights Watch study, in 2008

“Chinese security forces opened fire indiscriminately on demonstrators in at least four separate incidents, including in one area of downtown Lhasa on March 14. In order to avoid external or independent scrutiny of the security operations, the Chinese authorities effectively locked down the entire Tibetan plateau and dispatched massive numbers of troops across all Tibetan-inhabited areas. It expelled journalists and foreign observers, restricted travel to and within the region, cut or monitored telecommunications and internet, and arrested anyone suspected of reporting on the crackdown.”⁷

Since 2008, China has been quick to smother any hint of protest, however peaceful, and has also forcibly dispersed cultural and religious gatherings. Tibet Watch has documented mass arrests, arbitrary arrests, imposition of curfews, raids on residential and religious properties, and the disproportionate use of force including the use of gunfire on unarmed civilians. The following list comprises fatal incidents that Tibet Watch has been able to verify since 2008:

- 16 March 2008, Ngaba⁸: Between 13 and 30 people were shot and killed were security forces opened fire on protestors calling for the release of the Panchen Lama and two monks from Kirti Monastery who had been arrested the previous day.
- 3 April 2008, Thongkor⁹: 8 people shot during a protest against patriotic re-education and the arrest of two monks. The deceased are confirmed as: Zamphel, monk; Tsering Yangzom, female; Druklot Tso, female; unnamed female (daughter of a Tibetan man called Sangay); Delek, male; Tenlung, male; and Tsering Phuntsog, male.
- 17/18 August 2010, Palyul¹⁰: An unnamed man was shot dead by security forces at an environmental protest. Chinese state media reported that a 47-year-old Tibetan named Babo died after being hit "by a stray bullet when police fired warning shots with an anti-riot shotgun."
- 21 April 2011, Ngaba¹¹: Two people were killed while trying to prevent the forcible removal of over 300 monks from Kirti monastery. The deceased are confirmed as: Dhunko, male, aged 60, from Ngaba town, and Sharkyi, female, aged 64, from Nagtsang, Ja Township, Ngaba County.
- 23 January 2012, Drango¹²: Norpa Yonten and one other, unnamed, Tibetan man were shot dead at a protest against repression and the arrest of peaceful protestors. Tibet Watch can confirm that a further 36 people were injured, 12 seriously.
- 24 January 2012, Serthar¹³: Two people, one named Popo, were fatally shot during a protest against China's repression.
- 26 January 2012, Dzamthang County¹⁴: One young man named Urgen, aged 18-21, shot as crowds tried to prevent the arrest of a local activist.
- 9 February 2012, Drango¹⁵: Yeshe Rigsel and Yeshe Samdup (brothers) were shot dead by security forces while visiting their family home in Norpa village. It is reported that they had taken photographs of the

⁷ *I Saw it With My Own Eyes*, Human Rights Watch, 21 July 2010: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/07/19/china-witnesses-lift-veil-abuses-security-forces-tibet>

⁸ Ngaba town, Ngaba (Ch: Aba) County, Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Qiang and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

⁹ Thongkor (Ch: Donggu) town, Rongtrag (Ch: Danba) County, Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

¹⁰ Palyul (Ch: Baiyu) County, Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

¹¹ Ngaba town, Ngaba (Ch: Aba) County, Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Qiang and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

¹² Drago (also known as Drango) (Ch: Luhuo) County, Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

¹³ Serthar town, Serthar (Ch: Seda) County, Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

¹⁴ Barma (Ch: Zhongrangtang) township, Dzamthang (Ch: Rangtang) County, Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Qiang and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

¹⁵ Drago (also known as Drango) (Ch: Luhuo) County, Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

protest in Drango the previous month. Chinese state media reported that two murder suspects had been shot after resisting arrest and shooting at police officers.

- 6 March 2012, Pema¹⁶: One Tibetan man, Choeri, aged 28, was shot dead when security forces fired at a crowd calling for the release of detained protestors. Two other men were wounded in the same incident.
- 12 August 2014, Kardze¹⁷: Three men died of their injuries after being shot during a protest against their village leader's arrest. The deceased have been confirmed as Jinpa Tharchin, aged 18, Tsewang Gonpo, aged 60 and Yeshe, aged 42. They were taken into custody following the shooting and their bodies were returned to their families on 18 August 2014. Two other men were hospitalised with gunshot wounds following the same incident and their condition and whereabouts remain unknown.
- 21 November 2014, Driru¹⁸: Ngawang Monlam, leader of Wushong village, was killed by local Chinese authorities. A number of his supporters were also arrested.

NB: There have been numerous other incidents where security forces have used tear gas, batons, electric prods and gunfire on unarmed civilians, resulting in varying degrees of injury. The list above is limited to those incidents involving fatalities.

Self-immolation protests

Since February 2009 a new pattern has emerged of self-immolation protests by Tibetans. The first Tibetan to self-immolate was a monk in his twenties called Tabe who set himself alight in protest at religious restrictions in the restive area of Ngaba County¹⁹ on 27 February 2009. Chinese armed police shot at Tabe, extinguished the flames once he had collapsed to the ground and then transferred his body to a nearby van which drove away to an unknown location. Tibet Watch and other Tibet Support Groups have been unable to confirm whether he died of his injuries.

Self-immolation protests by Tibetans of all ages and social background have continued throughout Tibet since 2009 and the number currently stands at more than 130 people²⁰. The response from the Chinese authorities has been harsh and, in some cases, collective punishments have been imposed on entire communities following self-immolation protests. The act of self-immolation has been criminalised and at least one Tibetan has received a suspended death sentence for allegedly inciting self-immolations. Seven other individuals have also received lengthy sentences for the same 'crime'.

Increased surveillance and security

Security in Tibet has remained tight since the 2008 uprising. Freedom of movement for Tibetans has been severely restricted and surveillance measures are constantly increasing. Tibet Watch has received a significant number of reports of people being arrested simply for having made comments on social media which were critical of the Chinese government. For example, a young mother was arrested in Driru County²¹ on 13 October 2013 and charged with expressing anti-Chinese opinions on the social networking application Wechat. Numerous writers, singers and other artists have also been arrested for producing material which celebrates Tibetan identity and culture.²²

¹⁶ Tagkhar township, Pema (Ch: Banma) County, Golog (Ch: Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province

¹⁷ Shukpa and Denma villages, Lochung (Ch: Luoxu) township, Sershul (Ch: Shiqu) County, Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

¹⁸ Wushong village, Driru (Ch: Biru) County, Nagchu (Ch: Naqu) Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region

¹⁹ The protest took place in Ngaba town, Ngaba (Ch: Aba) County, Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Qiang and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

²⁰ For a full list of self-immolation protests, see: <http://freetibet.org/news-media/na/full-list-self-immolations-tibet>

²¹ Driru (Ch: Biru) County, Nagchu (Ch: Naqu) Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region

²² See Free Tibet's campaign for Tibet's Jailed Musicians for further examples: <http://freetibet.org/get-involved/tibets-jailed-musicians>

In October 2013, Driru County was placed under lockdown after a political re-education campaign sparked a series of protests. Any movement in or out of the county was restricted and many residents who were staying in Lhasa or other parts of Nagchu Prefecture at that time were unable to return home. On 8 October a notice was issued to all police stations and security checkpoints in Lhasa by the Old Lhasa Neighbourhood Headquarters. The notice instructed all police and security personnel to “observe the movements of Tibetans from Nagchu and increasingly interrogate the suspicious people from Nagchu”. The notice also provided details of the monitoring procedures and the code language to be used. All Tibetans from Driru were to be referred to as “tourists”. Driru was defined as “A Sector”, with additional sector codes given to certain other counties within the prefecture. Personnel who observed Nagchu Tibetans moving from their area into that of the next station or checkpoint were to advise their colleagues via two way radio using the terminology: “...tourists from A sector entered your area, please extend hospitality”.²³

One of the consequences has been fewer Tibetans managing to travel into exile and the Tibetan Reception Centre in Dharamsala has reported a distinct drop in the number of new arrivals. This has been largely attributed to the increasing levels of surveillance and border security.

In 2014, Tibet Watch obtained a copy of official guidelines issued by the local government of Purang County²⁴ on “rewards” to be handed out in exchange for information. Purang County is located in the sensitive border region close to Nepal and India. It is also the location of sacred pilgrimage sites such as Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar. The border with Nepal in Purang County has previously been a route used by Tibetans escaping through Nepal. A Tibetan woman in her late thirties who tried to escape Tibet via Purang County recounts her experience of torture in detention:

“I was caught by police when I was quite close to reaching the border with Nepal, that first time I tried to leave for India. I was travelling with a group of six of us from my village, including two children. But we were stopped and arrested by People’s Armed Police border security at a checkpoint. They took us to a local border security headquarters in Purang. There, they started to question us separately, and we were all kicked and punched by the soldiers.

“After five days in detention, we were transferred to the county police detention centre. They locked me up in a solitary cell with both my arms and feet shackled. I was kept there for some days. Then I was transferred to the police station for seven days and then taken to a labour re-education camp.

“When I was in a solitary cell at Purang county police detention centre, it was so tiny that only one person could fit inside it and move around a bit. But later on, at the re-education camp, it was much worse because the cell was totally dark. I could not see a thing. I was locked in there on my own for a few days. I have no idea why they left me in there – later on, other prisoners told me that prisoners could not survive much time in that cell. They said that even if a prisoner was healthy beforehand, if they spent a month in that cell, they might lose their mind.

“It was very normal to be beaten and tortured in detention. Sometimes when they were interrogating me the police beat me with electric batons and belts. Later on I could feel nothing because I lost all sensation in my body. Several times I lost consciousness, I think this was when they used electric batons and gave me shocks. When I was lying on the floor they would kick me. When I regained consciousness I would find myself again handcuffed in a cell alone. One day at the labour camp they locked me up alone without any food or water. Once they hung me up by my arms for a whole night from the ceiling.

“At the beginning of my sentence, they told me that my thinking should be reformed through labour, this is what re-education through labour means. So I had to do a lot of hard work, carrying stones and bags of sand. Two or three armed Chinese guards would follow us to supervise our work and sometimes in the fields outside the labour camp.

²³ Information passed to Tibet Watch – source identity withheld.

²⁴ Purang (Ch: Pulan) County, Ngari (Ch: Ali) Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region

“Sometimes, when we felt so sick that we were unable to move, the guards at the camp registered that we were absent from work. This affected our overall record in the camp and we knew that if we missed too many days we might have to stay longer. After a year, of hard work every day with poor food, my health got worse and worse. I got really sick and felt I was close to death. I was released from the camp then, I think because the Chinese authorities were worried that I might die in prison. They summoned my relatives to prison and they had to sign a document guaranteeing that I would not get involved in any activities that are against the law.

“After I was released my parents took me to hospital, where I stayed for a few months, and when I went home again, the labour camp officials still came to visit my family to check up on me. After a few years, I was finally able to safely escape again into exile in India.”²⁵

According to the International Campaign for Tibet, Deputy Party Secretary of the TAR (and Secretary of the Party Committee on Politics and Law in the TAR), Deng Xiaogang, visited border security and People’s Liberation Army bases in Purang County in May 2014. Deng Xiaogang was cited by state media as saying that border security checkpoints were key to maintaining social stability in the Tibet Autonomous Region and that security personnel should study Chinese leader Xi Jinping’s speech, with particular reference to his emphasis on maintaining social stability in Tibet and its importance to national security²⁶.

The copy of the document obtained by Tibet Watch²⁷ is titled “Document on Giving Rewards for the Protection of Stability and Management of TAR Border Areas’ Farmers and Nomads” and outlines how rewards will be offered for “information on illegal escape and entry into the country”, “information affecting the stability of border areas”, “information on separatist activities of the Dalai Clique” and “information related to terrorist activities”.

The rewards offered range from 500 Yuan²⁸ up to 50,000 Yuan²⁹. The majority of the rewards offered are 10,000 to 20,000 Yuan³⁰. The document further states that:

- Any person having knowledge and collecting and arresting the concerned person and bringing him to the Public Security Bureau (PSB) will be rewarded two and a half times more than the prescribed reward;
- For collecting information and helping the PSB in the arrest of the above described person will be rewarded one and a half times more than the prescribed reward; and
- For information collected by two or more farmers and nomads, an average reward will be given according to the number of people.

The rewards offered are financially substantial and there is a significant risk that anyone arrested on any of the specified charges will be subjected to torture or other mistreatment.

²⁵ *An experience of hard labour in detention after trying to escape*, testimony published by International Campaign for Tibet, 1 December 2014: <http://www.savetibet.org/newsroom/eyewitness-insights-from-tibet/>

²⁶ *China tightens control, prevents pilgrimage, before major Dalai Lama teaching in exile*, International Campaign for Tibet, 12 June 2014: <http://www.savetibet.org/china-tightens-control-prevents-pilgrimage-before-major-dalai-lama-teaching-in-exile/>

²⁷ Original document in Chinese language –source identity withheld. Although not published on the official Purang County website, this document has been referred to in articles published on the County website, such as in July 2014: <http://www.chinatibetnews.com/2014/0714/1346384.shtml>

²⁸ Approximately €70 / £52 / US \$80

²⁹ Approximately €6,970 / £5,216 / US \$8,000

³⁰ Approximately €1,394 to €2,788 / £1,043 to £2,087 / US \$1,600 to US \$3,200

Torture Survivor Testimonies

Golog Jigme

Golog Jigme was initially arrested in March 2008, following his involvement in the film project Leaving Fear Behind. He was severely tortured while in detention. He was released and re-arrested two more times before disappearing in September 2012. On 18 May 2014 he arrived at the Tibetan Reception Centre in Dharamsala, India. The following testimony was provided to Tibet Watch shortly after his arrival.

I have several names. People call me Golog Jigme and Golog Jigme Gyatso. My birth name is Lotsa and my monk's name is Jigme Gyatso. People in my home town also call me Jigme Lotsa, mixing my lay and monk's names. I am 43 years old. I am the third oldest of the five children in our family. I was born in Serthar County in Sichuan³¹. I became a monk at the age of 15 and later joined the influential Labrang Tashi Khyil Monastery in Sangchu County in Gansu³².

First arrest

I was first arrested on 23 March 2008. On that day, I was asked by Golog Lhabzo (Lhabzo means painter in Tibetan) to say some prayers in the house where he paints, which is located near my Labrang Monastery. At first I refused his request, saying that I was in danger and there were many troubles I was related to, but he insisted I come to his studio and do the prayers of Tara. That morning, I felt that I was in danger of being arrested, that someone was following me and that my mobile phone was being monitored. While doing the prayer, I also told one of my friends that I sensed something was going to happen to me.

Most of the monks who were invited to the prayer at Golog Lhabzo's painting studio had participated in the protests of 14 March 2008 (which the Chinese call the 3.14 protests). When they were leaving for home in the afternoon, after the prayer, I stayed back, fearing police would be waiting for us at the end of the bridge which leads towards our monastery. I told them to go home without me, saying I was staying back to talk to Golog Lhabzo.

After that, I went into Golog Lhabzo's kitchen and watched TV for a while. On the local news channel there was coverage of protests in Sangchu County which were being condemned. After 15 minutes, dozens of standard police officers and Special Police Units (SPU) of Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP) stormed into the house. They were led by Captain Zhang, the head of the Kanlho TAP police department. Captain Zhang was in plain clothes and the rest of his officers were in uniform. There were more police outside, with different weapons and electronic rods.

Upon entering the house, Captain Zhang reached for his mobile and started to dial a number. Fearing that the phone call was to me – in order to identify me – I switched off my phone immediately. Without the mobile phone ringing to identify me, Captain Zhang walked back and forth in the house several times. Everything went deathly quiet. Golog Lhabzo started arguing with the police saying his house and studio was a registered company and had all the legal papers of a company. He asked what the reason was for the police storming into his home.

In the middle of their argument, I stood up nervously to back up Golog Lhabzo and told them that as security personnel of a country they should treat people with respect. I was told by a police officer that it was none of my business. I replied that it wasn't a matter of one individual's business and you couldn't tame people by intimidating them with weapons. The officer looked at me sternly. I told him not to look at me like that. I asked them to tell us the reason for having all these forces here.

³¹ Serthar (Ch: Seda) County, Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

³² Sangchu (also known as Labrang) (Ch: Xiahe) County, Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province

At this point they all went outside and had a look at some photos Captain Zhang had brought along with him. Then they re-entered the house and looked around closely, pointing guns at us. They asked us to take out our phones and lay them down in front of them. I switched on my mobile phone and put it down on the floor. As soon as Captain Zhang started dialling again, my mobile rang. They asked whose phone it was and I admitted it was mine. One policeman tried to take the phone but I snatched it back and held on to it. They started beating me all over my body with their gun butts and electronic rods. I was beaten like you beat leather to soften it.

They put a black cloth over my head and I was dragged outside and put in a vehicle. Later I was told by friends that there were two armoured vehicles and approximately 1,000 armed security personnel in the area; all there to carry out my capture.

They took me to the police station in Sangchu County and started beating me again. I was also beaten on the way and some of my clothes were ripped off. Blood was dripping off the edge of my robe. At the police station, they took away all my belongings, including my mobile phone and wallet.

I found out later that those of my fellow monks who had attended the prayer ritual and left earlier had not been arrested. I believe that many of them would have been arrested if they had stayed with me at the house. There were several other monks in the house who were kept at gunpoint for half an hour after my capture but after that they were released.

I was beaten until 11 p.m. that night and then taken to another part of the police station for interrogation. I was told to kneel down by one of the interrogating officers but I refused, saying I would only do that for my kind parents and teachers, not for people who give harsh orders. I was beaten again.

During the interrogation I was asked why I was there. I told them: "How could I know? You brought me here." They said there were over a thousand monks at Labrang Monastery and that, out of all of them, I alone had been brought to the police station for a special reason. I argued back bitterly that if they had a reason then they should just tell me. What was the point of asking me?

They didn't ask anything specific. They just repeated a few questions such as "Why did you come here?" and "What do you know?" I was interrogated in this manner for the rest of that night, the whole of the next day and the whole of the next night. I was not allowed to sleep. Later in my detention, after I had been tortured, they started asking more specific things. One time they brought a print out of all my phone calls and asked me why I had made so many calls. They were sarcastic, saying that even the secretary of the TAP and county officers do not make so many calls. But all that was ahead of me. At this early stage the questions were just vague and frustrating. On the third day, I was transferred to Manker Prison in the capital of Sangchu County.

In that prison, I spent one night and half a day. Then I was handcuffed and taken into a changing room to put on a prison uniform. It was there that I saw Sangay and Jigme Guri³³, a senior monk from Labrang Monastery who is also known as Labrang Jigme or Jigme Gyatso. I found three identical uniforms hanging on the walls. One was for me and the other two were for Jigme Guri and Sangay.

At first I struggled to keep my monk's robes but they forcibly took them off me and put on the uniform. There were no shoes for us and we were told to walk barefoot. When I tried to put on my own shoes a policeman slapped my face for disobeying their orders.

The three of us were put into separate police cars and I was taken to Kachu (Ch: Linxia) Prison in Linxia City³⁴. I spent that night in Kachu Prison. The next day, I was hung from the ceiling by my handcuffs, which

³³ Jigme Guri is also known as Jigme Gyatso or Labrang Jigme. Like Golog Jigme, he is a senior monk from Labrang Monastery and recognised as a 'Tibetan Hero'. (<http://freetibetanheroes.org/jigme-guri>)

³⁴ Linxia City - county level city, Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province

were put through a hook in the ceiling. My toes just touched the cold floor. That day, I was interrogated by two Chinese officials. They couldn't understand Tibetan and my Chinese was not good enough to understand their questions. We had trouble communicating with each other and they started punching and kicking me to entertain themselves. I was hung like this for a whole day.

When it got dark, I was taken down and brought to a hot wood/coal burning stove. My handcuffs were removed and then I was re-handcuffed with the hot chimney of that stove between my arms. The stove and its chimney got hotter and hotter and my arms, chest and both sides of my face got burned and blistered. I kept turning my face, so the middle part (nose, chin and forehead) would not burn. At one point, I couldn't stand the heat any more. So I gave a hard tug to the chimney with my handcuffs. The hot chimney fell down and hit the neck of one of the police officers and burned him. My action made the policemen angry and they started beating me.

That night, I was taken into a freezing cold room with all the windows open. My guards went to sleep with warm clothes on. I couldn't sleep with all the pain of the burns on my chest and, even worse, I became very cold and started to get a fever. The next day, I was hung by my arms again. In total, I was tortured for two days and one night in Kachu Prison. Then I was taken back to the police station in the capital of Sangchu County. No-one bothered to interrogate me that night so I was able to sleep. The next day I was taken to what seemed to be a hotel room and kept there for five days.³⁵

After the hotel stay, I was taken to another place; my head, once again, covered with a black cloth. I could feel the bumpy road and hear several iron gates being opened, one after another. After my release, I went to check out this place and found out it was three kilometres away from Kachu military hospital in Linxia City. I also found out this place was notorious for torturing people with a device called the iron chair (also called the tiger chair).³⁶

When the black cloth was taken off my head, I found myself in a big room with an iron chair along with all sorts of torture devices laid out in front of me. They told me to have a look at these devices and I told myself that I was doomed to being beaten that day. As it started getting dark, some Chinese officials arrived and I recognised the man who had arrested me. Captain Zhang came towards me and hit my neck with a police baton several times. Captain Yu, another police official from Kachu, kicked me a couple of times. Then they all started beating me and slapping me with shoes.

After this, someone said in Chinese to hang me up. I thought it would be like before when they hung me from ceilings hooks, but I couldn't see any hooks or pipes in the room. To my surprise, I was tied to the iron chair, with both legs and hands shackled. Now the weight of my whole body was born by my shackled legs and wrists, without anywhere for my upper or lower body to lean against.

I was hanging from the chair, just above the floor, and they gave me electric shocks as well as kicking me in the head; all the time calling me "separatist" and shouting at me to confess, without telling me what to confess to. The pain of being hung from this iron chair was so great that I could not feel the pain from their beatings and kicking. I saw the time on the watch of a policeman. It was around 9:00 p.m. when I was put onto that chair and I was left there until dawn the next morning. I would guess it was around 7:00 a.m.

Jigme Guri, who was also tortured in the chair, told me later that he couldn't make it to more than three or four minutes without fainting because of the pain. I wished I could have fainted while hanging from the chair, but I didn't. Later I was told by one doctor that it may have been something to do with my bones.

³⁵ Chinese security personnel sometimes use hotels to detain prisoners. This practice is denied by the state but well documented by NGOs and also noted by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture following his mission to China in 2005.

³⁶ The torture that Golog Jigme describes is slightly different to some other accounts of the iron chair or tiger chair. In this case the chair seems to have been used as a vertical frame from which to hang the prisoner – several times facing in towards the chair and at least once facing outwards.

I was removed from that iron chair occasionally, but then faced beatings on the floor. Then they put me back onto the chair again. In total, I was put onto the chair seven times and I sustained scars on my wrists and ankles from the restraints.

I was put onto the chair without any clothes and they tried all sorts of tortures while I was there, like beating my back with tiny metal sticks, kicking me and giving electric shocks to my mouth. The pain the chair caused was too extreme to feel any of the pain caused by the metal sticks and kicking. When they gave me electric shocks, I could feel nothing. I only smelt the burning of my own flesh.

There were around 16 or 17 policemen there to force me onto the chair whenever I struggled. Once, they hung me forward from the chair. This made me feel that my chest was going to split into two and all my intestines were going to fall onto the floor. I became very dizzy and could not see properly. I thought I was hung in this position for four or five hours, but I was told later that this would have been impossible because I would be dead by then. But I am quite sure I was in this position for almost two hours.

I remember I heard someone saying in Chinese that it kills people if they are kept in that position for too long and that I was to be taken off the chair. I found out this was an older policeman. If this older man hadn't come to remind them, they would definitely have killed me from hanging me in that position.

During all my time under arrest, this was the worst form of torture I suffered. One of my ribs was broken and my joints suffered very badly. Whenever I remember that chair I feel scared, even to this day. I felt like it would be better to die than survive being tortured on that chair. I was kept on the chair days and nights. At one point, my feet got swollen and, to my horror, all my toenails fell off.

Besides the iron chair, the pain of thirst was the second worst torture. Due to the blood loss from my body, I felt like I was dying from thirst, but was only given a very small amount of water. Over time, I got used to hunger and sleep deprivation, but never to being thirsty.

I sustained various injuries during my detention and torture, including injuries to my backbone, eyes, hands and feet. Some of my ribs were broken and my knee joints were dislocated. On one occasion they said I would have been lucky to freeze to death. They were implying that it would have been better to die to escape the hell of their torture. The only Tibetan phrase that the police seemed able to speak was "Cho Soje" which translates as "kill you".

During the interrogations, they used to ask, "What did you do? With whom do you have connections?" They would display several photographs of Tibetans and ask who they were and what they were doing. When my answers didn't satisfy them, the officer would clap and the rest of them would blindly start hitting and kicking me. It felt like something out of a gangster film. This sort of torture became routine.

I was detained and tortured from 23 March 2008 until 12 May 2008. I still vividly remember my date of release on 12 May as it was the day when the Wenchuan earthquake³⁷ happened.

At no time during my three detentions did I ever receive a visit from a lawyer or any medical treatment. The Chinese authorities did not treat me in accordance with their own law. Nor were my family or monastery informed of my whereabouts. They knew I had disappeared, but nothing more. The authorities consider us Tibetans worse than animals. They do not value us as humans. Once you enter the torture centre, you feel your life is over. Death awaits you. So whether we confess or not, we are their victim. Knowing these things helped me to keep strong.

³⁷ A magnitude 7.9 earthquake in Sichuan Province which, according to BBC news reports, left 87,150 dead or missing, 370,000 injured and 4,800,000 homeless.

Second arrest

I was arrested again in 2009 on 10 April. I was with my friends in a restaurant when they came to take me. I was kept in captivity for approximately four months in a police detention centre in Sangchu County.

The main reason for my second arrest was my involvement in the dissemination of information about the protests in Tibet in China's brutal response. They learnt that I spoke to some international media, including Radio Free Asia, and told them that "all of Tibet is controlled in a crackdown by the Chinese". I told them during the interrogation that even civilians are under surveillance by China's armed forces, with tanks everywhere threatening ordinary Tibetans in many cities and areas, including Sangchu. I asked them: "Isn't it true? If it's not a crackdown, then what is it?" They did not answer me.

The other accusations against me included involvement in activities that "endangered national unity"; having a connection to "splittist groups", which refers to HH the Dalai Lama; and membership of "terrorist groups", which is a reference to the Tibetan Youth Congress. They told me that I had a way out if I confessed to connections with these activities and groups.

I told them some things. I told them about my work on the documentary *Leaving Fear Behind* and the dissemination of information to the media outside of Tibet. These are things I did. But the accusations of involvement in other activities and being a member of the Tibetan Youth Congress were untrue so I did not admit to them. I was also asked to revile HH the Dalai Lama. But this is unacceptable.

During this time in detention, they beat me with electric batons but didn't torture me that much compared to the previous time. Once again, I benefited from international attention. Early in my detention there was a period of five days when I was not fed food or water but suddenly they started feeding me again. I wasn't aware of the reason at the time but later I came to know that it was because of the constant efforts of international human rights groups and especially Reporters Without Borders.

Eventually I was released, on 29 July 2009, but they kept watching me. At least two security personnel were always following me and all my phone calls were tapped. Every week I had to report to the county police about my daily activities and I had to get their permission if I needed to go anywhere outside of Kanlho TAP.

Third arrest and escape from detention

I was arrested once again on 22 September 2012.

It is reported that Golog Jigme's residence within Labrang Monastery was razed by a Chinese work unit early in September. His was the only building in the monastery complex that was destroyed and he was obliged to take temporary refuge with one of his fellow monks. On 20 September he received an invitation to visit a family in Lanzhou, the capital city of Gansu Province, to perform Buddhist rites. On 21 September he travelled to Tsoe (Ch: Hezuo) County to submit paperwork and obtain travel permission from the prefecture level authorities. He stayed overnight in Tsoe County and disappeared the next day while on his way home to Labrang Monastery.³⁸

This time my hands and feet were chained but they didn't torture me. Instead they lectured me on how disloyal I had been to China and they also tried to make out that I was a criminal. They accused me of inciting people to set themselves on fire and being responsible for all the self-immolations that had taken place across Tibet.

³⁸ *Remembering the missing monk Golog Jigme*, Tsering Woesser, 11 October 2012, translated and published by High Peaks Pure Earth: <http://highpeakspureearth.com/2012/remembering-the-missing-monk-golog-jigme-by-woesser/>

Then suddenly they announced that after the national day of the People's Republic of China, which takes place on 1 October each year, I would be taken to one of the military hospitals in Lanzhou³⁹ where I would receive a medical check-up to ensure that I was free from any illness. If any illness was found, I was told that I might receive the necessary injections. Despite my expressing reservations about the need to visit a hospital so far away they were insistent.

However, I had information from other sources and I already knew that the medical check-up was fake. They were planning to kill me with one of those injections.

After learning of their plan, I decided to escape on 30 September. Of the two guards, one had to leave early for an urgent matter and the other went to sleep at midnight. After praying to His Holiness I was able to free myself from my chains. I noticed that the other guards were busy playing Mahjong [a dice game] and I took my chance. As I proceeded towards the main gate, I was lucky enough to find it open. At once, I ran out of the gate.

For two months I ran and hid across the mountains, after which I was shocked to find out that the Chinese government had accused me of murder. They had announced a reward of 200,000 Yuan to anyone with information on my whereabouts.

The Chinese government never made any such accusation when I was in their custody and I certainly never had any intention of killing anyone. I thought of protesting this false allegation by setting myself on fire before one of the police stations in either Gansu or Sichuan. However, after careful consideration, I decided not to proceed with this act. I thought that, perhaps, they were ashamed of my escape and were trying to cover it up with these charges. If I set myself on fire they would only continue to defame me by making such unimaginable allegations. But if I were to live I could continue to be of service to the Tibetan cause and so I changed my mind.

After I escaped I went into hiding, no longer wearing my monk's robes and dressing in common clothes. Those days were not easy, particularly during the first few months, because of the many injuries my body had suffered. I felt as if my body was a crushed and dysfunctional motorcycle. Even to this day I continue to have severe pain in my backbone and ribs and my knee dislocates whenever my body gets cold. I am now part of the evidence of how the Chinese are torturing and oppressing the Tibetans under their regime.

I cannot speak of the places I hid during my journey to India. I can tell you that I hid through mountains, rivers, forests and remote areas. For one year and eight months I hid and ran.

Now I have left Tibet I feel blessed and happy. I received a blessing from HH the Dalai Lama and a very warm welcome from groups and individuals in India. On the other hand, my body has arrived in a land of freedom but my heart feels greater anxiety because in Tibet I could at least involve myself in activities to revolt against injustice but here the feeling of helplessness surrounds me. This pains me. My biggest hope is that a day will come for me to safely return to Tibet. In the meantime, my future plan is to be a voice for Tibetans inside Tibet, to bring their aspirations and difficulties to the world stage and make sure that governments, NGOs and individuals hear it.

³⁹ Capital city of Gansu Province

Tenzin Namgyal

I was born in Kham⁴⁰, in Tibet, in 1974. I fled to India at the age of 15 to become a monk. At the time I travelled from my home to Lhasa and then on to the Nepal border, paying people along the way to take me to safety. I was a monk in south India for eight or nine years before having to return to Tibet in 1999 for family reasons. My mother passed away a few years after I returned to Tibet. I joined Dargye Monastery in Kham and stayed there for over ten years.

I visited India again in 2006 to take part in Kalachakra Buddhist teachings. I was encouraged by the activities carried out by Tibetan groups and their campaigns to promote human rights in Tibet. When I returned home I wanted to do something for Tibet and the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing were coming up.

2008 protests

I travelled to Lhasa in early 2008 and planned to bomb some bridges, railway or roads. I planned to bomb some sites - not people - but then the plans got changed. On 10 March 2008, protests broke out in Lhasa. I had already decided in February 2008 that it was better to protest than to bomb sites. I heard about the 10 March protests on that day and I also heard about monks being shot and killed in Lhasa. I heard on the phone from Amdo that protests were taking place there too.

By 15 March 2008 I was at my monastery in Khargang Township⁴¹ of Kardze County. There were a lot of people around and I was too scared to protest. I was looking for people and friends to protest with in Kardze. We were hearing a lot about protests taking place all over Tibet.

We decided we would protest around 18 or 19 March but military started coming in to the area on 15 or 16 March. On the evening of 17 March 2008, military arrived at my monastery. They had been tapping our phones and already knew about our plans to protest. I was told that the authorities needed to see my hukou [household registration card] and also wanted to pass on my phone number to other authorities. They tried to arrest me but I said I needed to go back to my living quarters. A lot of monks were waiting outside the monastery and I planned to escape.

The next day, in anticipation of my arrest, about 200 monks planned to go to Kardze County to demand that I be released. The authorities either knew about this or guessed that something might happen and around 1,000 military came to the area. The military waited on the bridge with machine guns and marked three lines on the bridge. Those who crossed the first line would be talked to but those who crossed the third line would be shot immediately. Two tulkus [reincarnate lamas] and all the officials of the township went to the bridge to see the situation and stopped the monks on the way. They told the monks they would sort everything out.

The authorities said that I was a separatist and those who supported me were also separatists. They had searched my home and found Dalai Lama cassettes, photos and confiscated them. My relatives had sent me a lot of these things – the text of Buddhist teachings, Kalachakra teachings by the Dalai Lama and photos. They were all taken away, although I only discovered all of this after I came out of prison.

Arrest and torture

I was arrested and taken to the detention centre in Kardze County. They said I would be investigated for several months but I didn't hear anything further about the investigation. They couldn't give me a formal sentence as they had no proof and I didn't admit to anything so I was in prison for one year and two months with no charges or sentencing.

⁴⁰ Traditionally the eastern region of Tibet

⁴¹ Khargang (Ch: Kagong) township, Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) County, Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

When we first arrived at the detention centre they left me in a room alone for about half an hour. They told me to think hard. After the waiting time had passed, the person they sent to interrogate me was someone I knew, knew well, and had known for a long time, almost like a relative. He asked why I was there and I said that I didn't know. He went out and asked others why I was there and they talked a lot.

When he came back in he poured me some water and said that I must have done something serious to be there. He said Dargye Monastery had 200-300 monks, Kardze Monastery had 200-300 monks, there were lots of other monks too and I was the only one who had been brought in - so I must have done something. He asked me what I had done and I said I didn't know. He repeated that I had done something, that I was splitting the nation. I said sorry and that I wasn't splitting the nation.

He asked me who I had been phoning and where I was getting calls from. I said that I make and receive all kinds of calls and that I was talking to all kinds of people. He asked if I talked to friends in Lhasa who were involved in protests - and if I talked about the protest to friends. My mind became dark when he asked me this question, since I talked about the Lhasa protests to my friends abroad on the phone. Sometimes I would run out of battery as I talked so much on the phone. I talked to them about the Lhasa protests and scenes of 10 March in the local area. But I told him that I just talked about family issues and nothing else.

He told me to speak honestly and that he could help me as we had known each other a long time. He asked me which countries I called and who I was talking to. I told him America, Germany and Australia. He asked me if I called Lhasa. I said I didn't call Lhasa, only to family and nobody else.

He asked me who I called in Kardze County. When he asked me this question I was frightened because I was arrested on 17 March 2008 and we planned to protest on 18 March so I made frequent phone calls to people in Kardze County. I told him that I made many calls to people in Kardze but we discussed everyday things. They asked me questions for five hours that night. I had arrived at 7pm and was questioned until midnight. They gave me some food.

On 18 March about 600-700 monks from Dargye monastery and other people protested in Kardze County but I was in the detention centre during this time and was not part of it. Among the protesters were monks who had supported me and also other people from Kardze County.

I was interrogated for a second time. Two people called Dorje and Dawa interrogated me and they told me to answer honestly, not like last time. After I said that everything I had said before was true, they hit me across the face. Then they kicked me so that I fell to the ground. They told me to speak truthfully. Dorje continued to question me as Dawa received a phone call and went out. He talked a lot on the phone. Dorje questioned me a lot but I said that I had nothing more to say other than what I'd already said.

Within 17 days about 200 prisoners came to be detained in Kardze County. I thought to myself that I would never tell the truth, even if they were to send my parents to interrogate me, as I didn't want harm to come to any person by telling the truth.

They hit my head roughly with a bamboo stick. They told me I was the one who caused trouble in Kardze County and I was the main person who instigated people to carry out the protests.

More officers arrived on 27 March, including Chinese officers. I thought maybe they had been sent from Dartsedo County. They carried one long gun and one small gun. They told me to speak truthfully. I had to speak in a mix of Chinese and Tibetan. Even after I answered their questions they said that I was lying and hit me with a chair so that I fell to the ground. They removed my monk's robes and forced me to kneel. They beat me fiercely and they said they were going to kill me. They said that however many people like me they killed, nobody would ever find out.

They told me: "We are going to kill you so say your prayers as you are religious man. It is better you don't look at us, we don't want you to harm us after you are reborn as a ghost." They made me turn around and

held a gun to the back of my head. They told me to think hard. They held the gun to the back of my head and they fired it. I heard the sound of the gun and my heart was beating so fast but I thought I was yet to die. I was extremely sad during that time because of their mistreatment.

They put the gun aside and asked if I had anything else to say. I said I didn't. They pointed the gun at me again and asked me if I had anything else to say. I was not sure whether they had bullets in the gun or not. They trampled my face on the floor and kept pointing the gun on my head. I thought I was going to die as many Tibetans had been killed by this kind of torture before.

I was bleeding a lot from my injured face. They beat me a lot with a long stick and short stick, even with the gun. They also hit my knees with an iron covered stick. Even today I have many scars on my knees. They beat me very hard and I thought that even the torture of hell is not worse than what I have to experience but I didn't make any suffering sounds.

That's how I became weak and an invalid with bad legs. The worst beating they gave me was on 29 March 2008. After seven days they tortured me again. The weather is really cold in Tibet between March and April. It is the time for snow and some rivers freeze. They forced me to sit in cold water with only underwear and my feet were stuck to the ice. Then they burned my body using electrical currents, even my tongue.

They tortured me through various ways but I didn't admit any wrongdoing so they hung me on the door by my hand chains. Due to this, I have many scars on my hand even today. We were many political prisoners together and they mistreated us all the same way. All the political prisoners were beaten and tortured. None of them were treated better than me, but some were treated worse than me.

Prison conditions

I was put into section number 10 first, then number 8, then 7, then 11, then 9. I was in five different sections altogether so I came into contact with many prisoners. The prison in Kardze County is considered the worst out of 18 or 19 prisons throughout Tibet. Some prisoners who had been transferred through almost all the prisons said that Kardze County's prison was the worst one out of all prisons in Tibet.

We didn't have any mattresses or blankets to put on in the night. It was only the political prisoners who didn't have these. The other prisoners who were there for killing and stealing had mattresses and blankets but we didn't have those things.

We were given food twice a day. At 10:00/10:30 they'd give us rice. The food was really poor. We had only a small ladle of rice and three pieces of potato. Sometimes they added leftover food of prison guards to ours. I stayed in the same cell for about four months and then I was moved. There were other Tibetan prisoners there who were very weak, couldn't stand up and were in pain - prisoners such as Palden Tsering and Tsedor from Derge County⁴². I would give my food to them. The food was really very poor.

All our heads were shaved except for the nuns, who were forced to grow their hair. There were two cameras in the cell. We were not allowed to say prayers or talk. Every morning at 8:00 a.m. we'd have to get up straight away. We had to do everything in a military style otherwise we'd be beaten. We had to keep our clothes and everything in our cell in a certain way, even those empty bottles which we used to drink water with had to be put properly in a line. Sometimes they checked our cell three times a week. Forty or fifty guards came together to check the cell with their guns. They stepped on our clothes and turned around everything inside the cell.

Usually in Chinese prisons, most of the prison officials are related to some industries and prisoners are engaged in manual labour. Since I was kept in Kardze prison I didn't have to do such work. But they sent us

⁴² Derge (Ch: Dege) County, Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

to the vegetable gardens to plant vegetables. We were also made to clean toilets and do other cleaning work.

At first when I was taken away my family and friends thought that I had died and later I heard they did many prayer offerings for me. It was only after four months or so that they learned I was still alive. One political prisoner, a Khenpo [abbot], was going out of the prison for medical treatment for tuberculosis. I wrote my home phone number on a piece of toilet paper and handed it to him, so he called my home to let them know I was in prison. They were relieved I was alive but they still didn't know much about my situation and they didn't really believe what the Chinese were telling them. My aunt came to the prison gate bringing clothes, food and money - 500 Yuan - and pleaded on her knees, crying, for these things to be given to me. They said this wasn't allowed and that she had to go back home.

Political education

We had to learn all about Communism and learn patriotic songs to sing for officials. We had to learn a song called 没有共产党就没有新中国 - "Without the Communist Party, There Would Be No New China". We had to sing these songs to officials who visited the prison, usually once a month. All prisoners had to learn these songs, otherwise you would get beatings from prison guards, and there were no exceptions made, even if you didn't know Chinese language.

We were taught that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a separatist operating from India. They said we needed to learn the laws according to the Communist Party, laws about the unity of nationalities and to be against the separatists. If you didn't understand during the classes or were unable to sing those Communist songs they'd punish you by putting you in a very small room in which you couldn't even stand up.

Release from prison

If you'd completed your sentence and were healthy, they'd release you on the right day and you'd be free to go. If you were in poor health they'd call relatives or friends to come and pick you up. Once 17 nun prisoners were released together and their family, relatives and friends came to receive them. There were a lot of people and about 60 motorbikes. Later the Chinese police criticised the nuns, saying they were at fault that so many people came to receive them from prison. After that they didn't inform prisoners' families about their release - they sent the prisoner directly to their home.

When I was released from Kardze prison they told me on the day that I would be released and they let me gather up all my things. All the other prisoners could see that I was getting ready to leave. I took off my prison uniform and gave it back. I was taken by car to the PSB office. They told me that I was being released and that I was a separatist and had admitted my wrongdoing. They showed me five or six pages about me. They said that I'd been imprisoned for a year and two months but was now being released for health reasons.

They told me I wasn't allowed to talk to people abroad. Also, I would have to report whatever was being discussed in the monastery. They also told me I wasn't allowed to travel or move around freely, that I'd have to seek permission. And that I couldn't return to my monastery for six months. Every month I had to report to the main PSB office in person and to the local PSB office three times a month. I had to sign many documents. If any kind of emergency situation arose I was told I would have to report to the local PSB office every three days.

The first person I saw after my release was my aunt and when she saw me she was crying a lot. I also nearly broke down in tears but I controlled myself as many Chinese police were around us and I didn't want them to see my tears.

Kelsang Tsundue

I am 29 years old. I escaped into exile in 2014 and am currently studying in Sera monastery in Mysore, south India. I was born to a Tibetan family in Choeshul village in Trotsik Town of Ngaba County.⁴³

2008 protests

I headed to Ngaba County's main town to protest against China's rule in Tibet along with 17 other monks from Trotsik monastery on 16 March 2008. We started protesting with the slogans "Let His Holiness the Dalai Lama Return to Tibet" and "Let Tibetans in exile and Tibetans inside Tibet be reunited". We walked along 'Heroes Street' in the main town.⁴⁴ Gradually, more and more Tibetans, including monks, nuns and lay-people, joined the protest. Then we realised hundreds of Tibetans were at the protest.

Just a few moments after the protest had started, Chinese paramilitary police, army and police arrived. Initially they barricaded the protesters from the main points of the street. Then a number of trucks were moving alongside the crowds. The security personnel were in black uniforms, with masks on their heads so that they could not be identified and guns in their hands pointed at us. Suddenly, they began to shoot at the crowd randomly. During that time, a young girl, seemingly around 20 years old, was shot in front of my eyes. A few Tibetans took her to hospital but I don't know what happened to her afterwards. I think another man was shot dead but I didn't see him myself because of the distance between us and the large number of protesters surrounding him.

On the same day, there were many protests happening in Ngaba, including at Kirti monastery. Thirteen Tibetans were shot dead on that day and a monk named Trinley Tsering (from Kirti monastery) who took photos of dead bodies and bullet wounds to send abroad was arrested. He was later sentenced to nine years in prison and is currently serving his term in Mianyang prison.

Later the same night, we came back and pulled down the Chinese national flags from the local government office and the government school based in Trotsik town. The next day, Chinese official cadres shut down Trotsik monastery and its religious activities. They closed the school and the monks were detained in the school hall. Every day they conducted meetings on Patriotic Re-education for the monks. Between the meetings they interrogated the monks, particularly those who participated in the protest.

At the end of a morning meeting a few days after the protest, Chinese official cadres read out a list of names, including mine and eight other fellow monks from the group, and asked us to stay back. Nine of us were from the group of 18 monks who had travelled to the county town for the protest on 16 March. When they asked us to stay back, many other monks also stayed back because they knew something would happen to us. But there were so many security personnel who forcefully dispersed the monks.

Arrest and detention

Then they arrested us. Chinese police handcuffed us together in pairs, put us in their vehicle and took us to a county detention centre. The moment we reached the detention centre, they pulled us out of the vehicle and, without a word, paramilitary police started beating us with the butts of their guns and batons. Then we were put into a prison cell which contained over 40 people. It was far too crowded. The county detention centres were all over-populated at that time as they had arrested so many Tibetans from the region. The food was terrible in the prison. They gave us the leftover food of the police and prison staff twice a day by adding water (the food was almost like water) in which we could find cigarette stubs and other dirty things. We were detained there for a few days.

⁴³ Choeshul village, Trotsik (Ch: Hezhi) town, Ngaba (Ch: Aba) County, Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Qiang and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

⁴⁴ Heroes Street in Ngaba acquired its name after becoming the location for a number of self-immolation protests.

On the morning of 31 March, the prison guards called me to come out. I thought they might interrogate me. When I came out, there were around 30 paramilitary police waiting, fully armed. They forced me down and shackled my hands. Five of my fellow monks and some other monks from nearby monasteries were already there, shackled in pairs. All of us were put into the vehicle on our knees. They took us to Mongshen prison.

On the way to Mongshen prison, the vehicle got stuck in the Trochu (Ch: Heishui) area due to snowfall. So they forcefully took off our clothes and used the fabric to wrap the tyres. It took us a day to get from Ngaba county town to Mongshen prison.

They sent us to different prison cells, so that each pair of Tibetans was placed with five Chinese prisoners. The Chinese prisoners treated us badly but the prison guards never cared about us, even though they could see everything. Later we came to know that the prison officials intentionally instigated this kind of thing from behind the scenes.

On 12 May 2008, a large earthquake occurred in Wenchuan and some other areas in Sichuan. The prison officials, guards and other staff ran away after locking the prison cells and gates. Fortunately, the prison didn't collapse nor was it badly damaged. After the earthquake settled down, they came back and took us over a mountain and we stayed there overnight under tight military surveillance to avoid the following aftershocks. The food became worse after the earthquake, which led to the weak health of prisoners. Many of us were unable even to stand on our feet. Some of the prisoners would lose consciousness due to malnutrition.

A month after the earthquake, a group of us were transferred to Kakhok (Ch: Hongyuan) prison. In addition to myself, there were five monks from Dhongri monastery, five monks from Trotsik monastery and a Tibetan named Namse. That time they shackled all of us in pairs and covered our heads with black cloths.

After six months in Kakhok prison, my five fellow monks (Tsultrim, Rabten, Gedun, Kelgym and Thubpa) were sentenced to one year and nine months in prison each. The monks from Dhongri monastery were sentenced to one year and five months each.

Court hearing and sentencing

Then they took me back to Ngaba County and Ngaba People's Court sentenced me to two years on charges of being the main instigator behind the monks from Trotsik monastery who participated in the protest and for taking down China's national flags in Trotsik Township and at the government school. They labelled me a separatist.

Days before my court hearing, two Chinese men visited me claiming they were my lawyers. They asked me to pay a 500 Yuan fee to each of them. I rejected their claims and demanded a lawyer of my own choice but this wasn't allowed. Finally I had to sign their documents and these two Chinese men said it was fine if I didn't pay them but they asked me to sign the document which stated that 500 Yuan was paid to each of them.

During the court hearing, neither my family members nor a lawyer of my own choice was present. I didn't have the right to say anything when the court declared the accusations, my alleged guilt and the court decision. I wasn't given any opportunity to clarify the accusations which were read out. A false confession of "mine" was also read out and I could not say anything in defence.

'Reform through labour'

I was imprisoned for around one month in the county prison while court procedures were taking place. Afterwards I was transferred to Mianyang prison where I served the rest of my prison term. There are five sections in Mianyang prison, with around seven hundred prisoners in each section. The work that each

section does is different from the others. I was in section IV and we were making shoes. We had to work from 7:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. (except meal times) under the policy of 'reform through labour' and without any form of payment. We had to get up at 6am and finish breakfast and get ready before 7:00 a.m. Work started from 7:00 a.m. and continued until 11:00 a.m., when we had one hour for lunch. Then we worked again from 12 noon to 5:00 p.m. We had one hour for dinner and evening work took place from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Then everyone had to go to sleep at the same time.

We did not receive any form of payment for our work. However, they gave out punishments, including beatings, or being put in a cage, either to individuals or to the whole group, if prisoners were unable to complete the planned number of shoes. They gave a certain target number of shoes to be made every week. If prisoners worked well, then they gave points to individual prisoners. Prisoners with sentences longer than three years could receive a reduction in their sentence if they earned enough points. But this wasn't applied to the Tibetan prisoners.

On 31 March 2010, I completed my prison sentence. That day, Ngaba County police came to Mianyang prison and secretly dropped me at my home door without informing my family about my release. Because other former political prisoners had been received by local Tibetans and monks with great honour, they took me home secretly to avoid a public reception.

Once I was released, I saw that a police station had been set up inside the monastery. They interrogated me several times every month and I had to seek permission if I wanted to travel out of the county.

Deaths in Custody

Tibetan political prisoners suffer from routine mistreatment and torture in custody. Since our last report Tibet Watch has documented several cases of death in custody. In some cases it was clear from the condition of the body that the person had been tortured. In each of these cases the family of the deceased was threatened and told not to reveal any details of the death. In other cases the body was not returned. Witnesses have told Tibet Watch that it is quite common for the body to be withheld when a Tibetan dies in custody as the body may show evidence of the prisoner's treatment and the manner of their death.

Chonjor

Sangchu County, Gansu Province, December 2011

Tibet Watch received reports that a young Tibetan man (in his twenties) named Chonjor was beaten to death in police custody in the Labrang area⁴⁵. He was detained by local police and handed over to the People's Armed Police on 9 December 2011. When his family went to the police station the next day to enquire as to his whereabouts, they were told that he was dead. A witness reported that he faced severe torture while in custody. No reason was given for his arrest.

Tsering Gyaltsen,

Drango County, Sichuan Province, February 2012



Tsering Gyaltsen was one of many Tibetans from Drango⁴⁶ who went into hiding following a protest there on 23 January 2012 (although he did not personally participate in the protest). During the protest, two Tibetans were shot dead and scores more sustained gunshot wounds when Chinese state security forces opened fire on the protesters. Over 100 Tibetans from the area were arbitrarily detained following the protest.

Tsering Gyaltsen was last seen on 9 February 2012 being taken away by security forces. According to an eyewitness, he had been badly beaten and was unable to walk. They believed his back had been broken. His relatives repeatedly went to the Public Security Bureau office to inquire about him. Each time they asked, local officials denied any knowledge of him.

In late May 2012, a police officer told Drango Monastery that Tsering had died. The family held a death ceremony but could not perform the traditional sky burial because they had not received his body.

Karwang

Kardze County, Sichuan Province, May 2012

Karwang, a 36-year-old monk from Kardze County⁴⁷, carried out a solo protest which involved handing out leaflets calling for religious rights, Tibetan independence and the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet. He was spreading the material in an area where the Chinese government had recently built 20 new houses for the purposes of 'nomadic resettlement', a policy enforced by the Chinese government in order to 'end the nomadic way of life in Tibet'. After his protest, Karwang left the area for religious teaching but was arrested on his return and taken to the Kardze County detention centre by Public Security Bureau (PSB) personnel.

⁴⁵ Labrang (also known as Sangchu) (Ch: Xiahe) County, Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province

⁴⁶ Drango (also known as Drango) (Ch: Luhuo) County, Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

⁴⁷ Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) County, Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province

Eight days after his detention, in the third week of May 2012, Karwang's family received a call from the PSB informing them of their son's death and instructing them to collect his body. The family were repeatedly harassed by the local authorities following Karwang's death, including through the duration of the traditional Tibetan death ceremony.

Guldrak

Kakhok County, Sichuan Province, August 2013

A Tibetan man named Guldrak, believed to be 29 years old, was arrested for theft on 8 August 2013 in Maywa village⁴⁸. He was severely beaten during the interrogation and died in detention the same day. It has been reported that the interrogation was led by Rinchen, the head of the Public Security Bureau in Maywa, but this cannot be independently confirmed.

At first, police tried to disguise Guldrak's death as suicide, but this was rejected by around 500 local Tibetans who staged a sit-in protest in front of the detention centre where Guldrak was being held and demanded the truth about the cause of his death. In response to the protest, local police accepted responsibility for Guldrak's death and offered 50,000 Yuan (approximately US\$8,000/£5,200) for his funeral services and another 500,000 Yuan (approximately US\$80,000/£52,000) for compensation.

Kunchok Drakpa

Driru County, Tibet Autonomous Region, December 2013

Kunchok Drakpa was detained by Chinese authorities at the beginning of December 2013 on suspicion of having played a leading role in mining protests in Driru County earlier that year.

Kunchok was in his mid-forties, came from Chamram village, Driru Township⁴⁹, and had a wife and two young sons. He was known for his commitment to the environment and speaking out against the mining activities. His body was returned to his family towards the end of December 2013 but news of his death only reached the outside world two months later. His body bore signs of severe beatings and torture. His family were threatened not to disclose any details about the incident.

Ngawang Jamyang

Driru County, Tibet Autonomous Region, December 2013



Senior and highly respected monk Ngawang Jamyang was among three monks from Tarmoe monastery in Driru County⁵⁰ who were arrested on 23 November 2013. Ngawang Jamyang was born in 1968 in Totho village and became a monk at Tarmoe, his local monastery, in 1987. He had previously been imprisoned for two years in 2008 on charges of 'having relations with outside'.

No reason was given for their arrests and their families were given no information about their detention. On the same day, a large number of armed forces and police raided Tarmoe monastery. They searched every room and confiscated two laptops from Ngawang's room. Driru County had been the scene of ongoing protests and arrests since Tibetans refused to fly the Chinese flag on their houses in September 2013. A number of religious institutes were targeted during the crackdown.

⁴⁸ Maywa village, Khyungchu (Chinese: Qiongxi) Township, Kakhok (Ch: Hongyuan) County, Sichuan Province

⁴⁹ Chamram village, Driru Township, Driru (Ch: Biru) County, Nagchu (Ch: Naqu) Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region

⁵⁰ Driru (Ch: Biru) County, Nagchu (Ch: Naqu) Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region

On 17 December, Ngawang Jamyang's dead body was returned to his family by the authorities in Lhasa. The family were threatened with execution if they shared news of his death with anyone outside of Tibet. Despite these threats, Tibet Watch researchers were told: "It was clear from Jamyang's body that he was tortured and beaten to death in a secret detention centre. He did not have any health problems before and was fine when leaving his monastery to Lhasa".⁵¹

Another person from the area spoke of the impact of the monk's death on the community:

"Jamyang's death came as a huge shock to the residents of Driru, especially the monks of Tarmoe monastery. He was the most efficient administrator, teacher and a very conscientious person. Tarmoe would never be the same again without him, beside monastic excellent services, he was also well respected by the local community for his numerous social welfare activities such as helping to peacefully mediate disputes and helping local Tibetans to stop harmful habits such as gambling."⁵²

Ngawang Jamyang's family took his body to the traditional cremation ground near Sera monastery in Lhasa. The whereabouts and situation of Kelsang Choklang and the other monk who was arrested with Ngawang Jamyang remain unknown.

⁵¹ Quote from Tibet Watch source - identity withheld.

⁵² Quote from Tibet Watch source - identity withheld.

Deaths Resulting from Torture

Tibetan political prisoners suffer from routine mistreatment and torture in Chinese prisons and detention centres. Over the years, Tibet Watch has noted a pattern of gravely ill Tibetan political prisoners in China being released early in order to reduce the number of deaths in detention. Tibet Watch has confirmed the deaths of the following three prisoners since the submission of our last report.

Norla Ashagtsang

Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, December 2011

In December 2011, Tibet Watch was able to confirm that Tibetan former political prisoner Norla Ashagtsang had died in Lhasa the previous year. Norla Ashagtsang was arrested protesting against Chinese repression in June 2009 and was severely beaten at the time. He was imprisoned, subjected to torture and suffered from a prolonged illness as a result of injuries sustained during detention. In 2010, Norla Ashagtsang was released on medical parole but witnesses informed Tibet Watch researchers that he finally “succumbed to Chinese torture” on 27 December 2010.

Goshul Lobsang

Machu County, Gansu Province, March 2014



Goshul Lobsang died at the age of 43 on 19 March 2014 having served three years of an 11 year prison sentence.

A warrant for his arrest was issued in 2008 based on accusations of having played a leading role in protests which took place in Machu County⁵³ earlier that year. He evaded the authorities for two years but was eventually caught and arrested in 2010.

Following his arrest, he was subjected to severe interrogations, beatings and torture for a period of approximately five months. The torture included being left outside naked in Tibet’s bitter winter. According to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), “he was subjected to severe torture including pain-

inducing injections, and deprived of sleep and food by the interrogation officers in Machu County”. Another source told TCHRD that “police officers used sharp-pointed objects such as toothpicks to repeatedly pierce and penetrate into the tops of his finger nails and cuticles. This stabbing, applied with force and consistency, resulted in severe bleeding, swelling and pain making Goshul Lobsang unable to temporarily use his hands.”⁵⁴

Goshul Lobsang was then transferred to a prison in Lanzhou City and a sentence of 11 years was confirmed. He continued to suffer interrogation and torture in Lanzhou and his health deteriorated as a consequence. He was emaciated, in constant pain and his skin colour had changed. It became clear that he might not survive for much longer and he was released from prison on 29 November 2013.

⁵³ Machu (Ch: Maqu) County, Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province

⁵⁴ *Goshul Lobsang tortured with pain-inducing injections, leaves a defiant note after untimely death*, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 31 March 2014: <http://www.tchrd.org/2014/03/goshul-lobsang-tortured-with-pain-inducing-injections-leaves-a-defiant-note-after-untimely-death/>

A witness told Tibet Watch that, despite his dire condition, Goshul Lobsang refused to seek treatment from any Chinese hospitals after his release from prison. Tibetan doctors were consulted but were unable to effect any real improvement in his condition. Eventually, all medical treatment had to be stopped as his family could not afford to continue. In the weeks leading up to his death he was unable to swallow any solid food and gradually became completely unresponsive.



Tenzin Choedak

Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, December 2014



Tenzin Choedak died on 5 December 2014 in Lhasa's Mentsee Khang (Traditional Tibetan Medical Institute). He had been serving a 15 year prison term in Chushul prison near Lhasa and was released by prison authorities just days before his death. Tenzin Choedak was severely beaten and tortured over the six years he was in detention.

Tenzin Choedak fled Tibet for India in 1991 and joined the Tibetan Children's Village in Upper Dharamsala, northern India. He returned to Tibet at the end of 2004. He spent many years in Lhasa with a European NGO working on environment and health issues of rural Tibetans.

In mid-April 2008, Tenzin Choedak was arrested by Lhasa police on allegations of leading the March 2008 protests and his whereabouts and situation remained unknown to family members for several months. In

September 2008, Lhasa Intermediate People's Court sentenced him to a 15 year prison term.

Tenzin Choedak lost his vision as a consequence of beatings and torture suffered in prison. He also suffered chronic diseases as a result of torture which damaged his brain and he would often vomit blood. In November 2014, the family were allowed to visit Tenzin Choedak but he was almost unrecognisable as his body had become so emaciated. He had become mentally unsound and was unable to recognise his own mother. Even in this condition, Tenzin Choedak was still shackled by his hands and feet in bed and was watched by four members of police personnel in the ward of the hospital.

Tenzin Choedak was handed over to his family on 2 December 2014. According to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, "When he was returned to his family, Choedak had dislocated jawbones and damaged kidneys. He was physically emaciated and vomiting blood because of a brain injury. All the bones in his feet were broken."⁵⁵ On 5 December 2014, Tenzin Choedak died at 1:13 p.m. in Mentsee Khang, Lhasa.

⁵⁵ *Remembering the fearless 'ghost' Tenzin Choedrak (1981-2014)*, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 30 January 2015: <http://www.tchrd.org/2015/01/remembering-the-fearless-ghost-tenzin-choedrak-1981-2014/>

Prisoners of Concern

There are a significant number of Tibetans in Chinese detention who are political prisoners or prisoners of conscience. This report does not attempt to provide a definitive list of Tibetan prisoners. However, this list highlights the cases of a few individuals who are believed to be at particular risk of torture.

Dolma Kyab

In August 2013, Dolma Kyab was sentenced to death for his wife's murder, following her self-immolation protest in March 2013. Authorities had previously tried to bribe the family to say her death had been a suicide for personal reasons rather than a protest. Dolma Kyab was arrested when the bribery proved unsuccessful and was convicted on the basis of a confession which Tibet Watch believes to be either coerced or false. A witness told Tibet Watch that, during his pre-trial detention, Dolma Kyab had been taken out of his cell every two to three days and returned unconscious. The most recent information about Dolma Kyab came from Chinese state media and confirmed that he was on death row with the possibility of appeal. Tibet Watch has been unable to confirm whether his appeal has taken place or not.

Request for information on Dolma Kyab's current whereabouts (including the name and location of the prison where he is being held), health condition, family visitation rights and the status of his death sentence.

Lobsang Konchok

According to Chinese state media, Lobsang Konchok received the death penalty on 31 January 2013 for allegedly inciting eight self-immolation protests. Lobsang Konchok was "sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve and has been stripped of his political rights for life".⁵⁶

Request for information on Lobsang Konchok's current whereabouts (including the name and location of the prison where he is being held), health condition, family visitation rights and the status of his death sentence.

Jigme Gyatso

After more than three years in detention, Jigme Gyatso was sentenced to five years in prison on charges of "inciting splitism" by a court in Lanzhou on 5 September 2014. Apart from a court appointed lawyer no-one else was allowed at the trial.

Golog Jigme, who escaped to India in 2014 after more than a year on the run from the authorities in Tibet, was a close friend of Jigme Gyatso's and told Tibet Watch: "[...] Jigme was sentenced to five years by a court in Lanzhou on 5 September. At least this will be better for him rather than remaining in the hands of the brutal police and authorities in detention. In detention there are interrogations and torture included beatings. Family members are unable to know his whereabouts and situation while in detention. Now it has already been three years since Jigme was arrested and he will be released after two years if usual procedures are followed. But who knows what the authorities will do, they often do not follow the rules."

Jigme Gyatso was previously arrested in 2008 on suspicion of being one of the ring leaders of protests in Labrang. He was released a month later, after almost dying from torture. He recorded a testimony of his torture during that time.

Request for information on Jigme Gyatso's current whereabouts (including the name and location of the prison where he is being held), health condition, and details of how often he receives family visits.

⁵⁶ *China sentences 2 Tibetans over self-immolation*, Xinhua, 31 January 2013: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-01/31/c_132141355.htm

Khenpo Kartse

At the end of 2014, social activist and environmentalist monk Khenpo Kartse was sentenced in a secret trial to two years and six months in prison in Chamdo (Ch: Changdu) Prefecture in the Tibet Autonomous Region. He had been in detention for almost a year prior to the sentencing.

The arrest of Khenpo Kartse in December 2013 led to huge protests in Tibet calling for his release. Khenpo Kartse was only allowed a lawyer two months after his arrest. He had been charged with harbouring other Tibetan monks in his monastery who were wanted by the Chinese police. His lawyer rejected the charge and demanded that Khenpo Kartse be either released immediately or moved to better prison conditions. Khenpo Kartse is reported to be in very bad health and according to some reports has been denied much needed medical treatment.

Request for information on Khenpo Kartse's precise whereabouts (including the name and location of the prison where he is being held), current health condition and details of how often he receives family visits. Additional request for Khenpo Kartse to receive immediate medical treatment.

Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche

Arrested in April 2002 for alleged involvement in a bomb explosion in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, community leader Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche and his colleague Lobsang Dhondup were sentenced to death in December 2002. Despite an appeal, Lobsang was executed on 26 January 2003. Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche's death sentence was suspended and commuted to life imprisonment in January 2005.

Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche continues to protest his innocence and, as recently as October 2014, images from Tibet showed a large assembly of Tibetans in Nyagchu (Ch: Yajiang) County praying for his immediate release. According to prominent Tibetan writer Tsering Woeser, "In March this year (2014), during Tibetan New Year, the Secretary of Lithang County Party Committee warned Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's younger sister that she was not allowed to go to Chengdu to visit her brother, and even if she arranged a lawyer to review the case, she must only follow the orders of the local authorities, otherwise she and her family would also be arrested."⁵⁷

Request for information on Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche's precise whereabouts (including the name and location of the prison where he is being held), current health condition and details of how often he receives family visits. Additional request for Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche to receive immediate medical treatment.

Tibet's Jailed Musicians

The following prisoners are highlighted in Free Tibet's campaign for Tibet's Jailed Musicians and have previously been the subject of a joint communication from the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and Independent Expert on Minority Issues. The information provided by China in response to that communication was insubstantial and there is concern that these prisoners are at risk of torture and that the state is deliberately withholding information about the conditions of their detention.

⁵⁷ *Remembering Tenzin Delek Rinpoche Who Has Been Wrongfully Serving A Prison Sentence for 12 Years*, Woeser, written in April 2014, English translation published on High Peaks Pure Earth on 17 October 2014: <http://highpeakspureearth.com/2014/remembering-tenzin-delek-rinpoche-who-has-been-wrongfully-serving-a-prison-sentence-for-12-years-by-woeser/>

Kalsang Yarphe

Kalsang Yarphe, father of three, was detained in July 2013 and sentenced by China's Chengdu Jinniu People's Court to four years in prison on 27 November 2014. In an official response to the joint appeal from UN special procedures mandate holders in April 2014⁵⁸, China said: "On Kalsang Yarphe, there is lack of reliable information [...]. We, therefore, cannot verify their authentic identities and personal data."

- *Request for confirmation of Kalsang Yarphe's sentence, information on his precise whereabouts (including the name and location of the prison where he is being held), current health condition and details of how often he receives family visits.*

Pema Tinley and Chakdor

Pema Tinley and Chakdor, musical partners, were detained in 2012 and sentenced to four years in prison in February 2013. They are currently imprisoned in Mianyang prison, Sichuan Province. Pema Tinley's family have been denied visiting rights.

In an official communication to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in April 2014⁵⁹, China said: "Pema Tinley is a Tibetan man of 24 years of age. He originates from the Malma, Aba County, Sichuan Province. Chakdor, also known as Xuegduo, is a Tibetan man of 32 years of age. He originates from the Malma, Aba County, Sichuan Province. On the 3rd of February, 2013, these two people were sentenced to four years in prison by the judicial organ on a charge of seditiously splitting the state with three years' deprivation of political rights. At present, these two people are in the process of serving their respective prison sentences."

- *Request for information on Pema Tinley and Chakdor's health conditions and that they be allowed visits by family members.*

Lolo

Lolo was detained in February 2013 and sentenced to six years in prison. In an official communication to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in April 2014⁶⁰, China said: "Lolo, originally known as Luo Xiang, is a man of 31 years of age. He is a villager from the First Commune, Dhomda village, Chengduo County, Yushu, Qinghai Province. On the 26th of February, 2013, he was sentenced to six years in prison by the judicial organ on a charge of seditiously splitting the state with three years' deprivation of political rights. At present, Luo is in the process of serving his prison sentence."

- *Request for information about Lolo's precise whereabouts (including the name and location of the prison where he is being held), current health condition and details of how often he receives family visits.*

Shawo Tashi

Shawo Tashi was detained in November 2012 and sentenced to five years in prison. In an official communication to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in April 2014⁶¹, China said: "Shawo Tashi is a man of 39 years of age. He originates from Dowa Township in Tongren County, Huangnan, Qinghai Province. On the 26th of February, 2013, he carried out activities to seditiously split the state. On this charge, he was sentenced by the judicial organ to five years in prison with three years' deprivation of political rights. At present, he is in the process of serving his prison sentence."

- *Request for information about Shawo Tashi's precise whereabouts (including the name and location of the prison where he is being held), current health condition and details of how often he receives family visits.*

⁵⁸ Official Communication No. A/HRC/26/21: https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/26th/China_30.04.14_%281.2014%29.pdf

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Trinley Tsekar

Trinley Tsekar is a singer from Driru County (Ch: Biru) who was detained on 20 November 2013 and sentenced to nine years in prison. In an official communication to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in April 2014⁶², China said: “Trinley Tsekar is a man of 22 years of age. He originates from Biru County, Tibet Autonomous Region. Previously, he committed robbery and served two years and six months in prison. On the 24th of May, 2013, Trinley led many people to attack the local public security organ, assaulting policemen, smashing offices, damaging properties and objects, gravely disturbing social order. On the 19th of December, 2013, Trinley was sentenced to nine years imprisonment by the judicial organ on a charge of the impacting state organs with four years’ deprivation of political rights. At present, Trinley is in the process of serving his prison sentence.

- *Request for information about Trinley Tsekar’s precise whereabouts (including the name and location of the prison where he is being held), the basis of his conviction (including the evidence provided), his current health condition and details of how often he receives family visits.*

Gongpo Tsezin

Gongpo Tsezin was detained on 30 November 2013. His current condition is unknown. In an official communication to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in April 2014⁶³, China said: “Gongpo Tsezin is a man of 26 years of age. He originates from Biru County, Tibet Autonomous Region. On the 2nd of December, 2013, Gongpo was detained on suspicion of a criminal offence of seditiously splitting the state. On the 7th of January, 2014, a warrant was issued by the prosecuting authority for his arrest. On the 20th of February, 2014, he was transferred to the public prosecutor’s office for a trial at court. At the present, Gongpo is on bail due to several illnesses he suffers and he is also receiving medical treatments.”

- *Request for information about Gongpo Tsezin’s current whereabouts, health condition and medical treatment being received.*

Achok Phulshung

Achok Phulshung was detained in August 2012. No information about his current whereabouts or any trial has been released since his arrest. In an official communication to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in April 2014⁶⁴, China said: “On Kelsang Yarphel and Achok (both names are transliterations), there is lack of reliable information on them. We, therefore, cannot verify their authentic identities and personal data.”

- *Request for information about Achok Phulshung’s prison sentence, precise whereabouts (including the name and location of the prison where he is being held), current health condition and details of how often he receives family visits.*

Choksal and Pema Rigzin

Choksal was detained in July 2012 and sentenced to two years in prison in Lhasa. Pema Rigzin was detained on 7 May 2013 for producing albums for Tibetan singers Chokdor, Pema Thinley and Achok Phulshung at his studio. Both of these men were ignored by China in their official communication with the UN.

- *Request for information about Choksal and Pema Rigzin - their precise whereabouts (including the name and location of the prison where they are being held), current health condition and details of how often they receive family visits.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Universal Jurisdiction

On 28 June 2005 a case was put before the Spanish National Court (Audiencia Nacional), under the principle of universal jurisdiction, accusing former Chinese officials of crimes against humanity, genocide, torture and terrorism against the Tibetan people. The case was presented by Comité de Apoyo al Tíbet, a Madrid-based NGO, and co-signed by Thubten Wangchen, a Spanish citizen and Director of Casa del Tíbet in Barcelona, as well as by national and international human rights organisations. It was also supported by expert jurists and international Tibet Support Groups.

The case was initially rejected but following an appeal it was admitted on 10 January 2006 and assigned to Judge Ismael Moreno. On 30 March 2011 the court also accepted an application to extend the classification to include war crimes, citing evidence of serious violations of the Geneva Conventions.

On 21 March 2013 another application for extension was lodged – this time requesting the inclusion of former president Hu Jintao, as his diplomatic immunity had expired. This application was initially rejected but an appeal was heard on 29 July 2013 and the application was then accepted on 9 October 2013.

On 18 November 2013 the court ruled that arrest warrants should be issued for five of the Chinese leaders named in the suit: Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Qiao Shi, Chen Kuiyuan and Deng Delyun.

China had objected to the case from the beginning but started to exert political pressure on the Spanish government once the order for the arrest warrants was published. Consequently the Spanish government started pushing through legislative reforms that would bring about an end to the case, despite objections by some politicians that the changes were unconstitutional. In February 2014 a bill was passed limiting the power of the Spanish judiciary to investigate human rights abuses committed outside the country – effectively limiting the implementation of international law and the principle of universal jurisdiction.

On 23 June 2014, Spain's National Court voted 9-7 to shelve the case and China promptly thanked the Spanish government for "its 'efforts' in improving bilateral relations".⁶⁵

However, also in June 2014, the Spanish Constitutional Court admitted an appeal from 50 members of parliament against the reforms which were rushed through earlier in the year and will investigate whether or not the reforms were constitutional. Furthermore, on 18 September 2014, an appeal was lodged with the Supreme Court against the decision to shelve the Tibetan case. Both of these proceedings are at risk of further interference from the Chinese government.

⁶⁵ <http://vidalatinasd.com/news/2014/jun/24/china-hails-spanish-courts-decision-to-drop-tibet/>

List of Issues - Recommendations

In light of the evidence presented here, the contributing organisations requests the Committee to use the opportunity provided by the review of China's fifth periodic report to raise the following issues:

Article 1

With reference to the concerns raised by the Committee in the List of Issues adopted in 2008, we note that Tibetan political prisoners still experience considerable mental suffering as a result of torture, political education, forced labour, restrictions on religious practice and other prison conditions. Security personnel in China often attempt to coerce Tibetan prisoners into denouncing the Dalai Lama. They also make deliberately insulting remarks about the Dalai Lama which are intended to cause emotional suffering. In addition, Tibetan prisoners often find that religious practice is restricted and sometimes completely prohibited. Given the importance of Buddhism in the lives of most Tibetans, and the fact that many political prisoners are monks or nuns, such treatment should be recognised as torture and prevented.

Article 2

Despite the measures outlined in the state party report, severe torture is still routinely inflicted on Tibetan prisoners, particularly in pre-trial detention. China must make genuine efforts to eradicate the use of torture in practice as well as on paper.

The testimonies presented here provide evidence of medical treatment being withheld from Tibetan prisoners. This includes medical treatment for illnesses arising from prison conditions and injuries resulting from torture. Notwithstanding the fact that such illnesses and injuries should be prevented in the first place, appropriate medical attention should be provided to all prisoners without delay or discrimination.

Tibetan prisoners are given no choice in the matter of legal representation and the service provided by the state is completely ineffective. The legal defence provided to all prisoners should be improved.

The deaths listed in this report, which have occurred in detention or as a result of detention conditions, should be investigated.

When Tibetans are arrested there is normally an unreasonable delay before relatives are informed of their whereabouts and the charges against them. Very often the families are simply informed that their relative has been arrested but are not provided with any details of the charges or the person's condition. Sometimes Tibetans are detained incommunicado and no information is provided to the families at all. Tibetan prisoners and their families should be treated in accordance with Chinese law.

Many Tibetan prisoners are held in pre-trial detention for months without any formal charges. Tibetan prisoners should be informed promptly of the charges against them and released if no recognisable charges can be established.

Article 11

Tibetans are routinely treated differently to other prisoners – usually worse. In some cases Tibetan prisoners have been told that certain rules or benefits do not apply to them on the basis that they are political prisoners. This is clear discrimination. Tibetan prisoners should be treated in accordance with Chinese law and international standards.

The prison conditions described in the testimonies presented here amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Conditions for all prisoners should be improved to meet international standards.

The testimonies presented here provide evidence of forced labour. Some prisoners have been forced to work from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. without any pay and are subjected to harsh punishments if the manufacturing targets are not met. This practice should be brought to an end.

Prison authorities turn a blind eye to inter-prisoner violence involving Tibetans and some prisoners have testified that such violence is actually instigated by the authorities. Such incidents should be investigated and prevented.

Article 14

The families of Tibetan prisoners who have died in custody or as a result of torture are often harassed rather than compensated. Appropriate mechanisms should be put in place whereby all families, including Tibetans, are able to make complaints regarding such deaths and instances of torture. All complaints should be fully investigated and compensation paid where appropriate. We request clarification on whether any compensation has been paid to the torture survivors whose testimonies are presented in this report or to the families of those whose deaths are reported here.

Article 15

Many Tibetan prisoners are convicted on the basis of confessions which have either been coerced or falsified. The testimonies presented here include evidence of prisoners being forced to sign confessions which they have never seen as a condition of their release following completion of their sentence. We request information regarding the frequency with which Tibetan political prisoners are convicted solely or primarily on the basis of confessions.

Other issues:

We request the Committee look into whether China's behaviour in relation to the universal jurisdiction case in Spain is in keeping with its obligations under the Convention and seek assurances that China will not interfere further in such cases.