

Youth Urgent Action



WHO: Tibetan Monk - Karma Tsewang
WHAT: Unfair detention & risk of torture
WHERE: Tibet

SUMMARY

Well known Tibetan monk, Karma Tsewang, was detained by the Chinese authorities in south-west China on 6 December 2013 on suspicion of 'endangering state security'. Sixteen of his supporters were also detained after they held a demonstration to demand his release. They have not been allowed to see a lawyer and are at risk of torture.

DETAILS

Karma Tsewang is a well-respected monk in charge of a Buddhist monastery in an area of north-west China called Qinghai Province. Whilst travelling for business he was taken by the Chinese authorities. His lawyer says that he is being held on suspicion of 'endangering state security' but the authorities have not given details of what this may relate to. He is currently being held at an unknown location in Chengu, south-west China.

After his arrest, 4000 people signed a petition demanding his release and on the 10 December 600 people, including monks from Karma Tsewang's monastery, held a demonstration. They were warned that he would face even more severe punishment if they continued the protest. Even though they did end the demonstration 16 monks were detained on the 20 and 21 December.

On 23 December Karma Tsewang's lawyer tried to see him but the authorities refused. They also warned Karma's family and those of the other 16 monks not to hire lawyers or they would face arrest themselves.

BACKGROUND

Karma Tsewang is head of the Gongya Monastery. It is an important monastery in the area with 300 monks, 200 nuns and 100 young monks. It holds an annual event, the Grand Prayer for World Peace which attracts tens of thousands of Tibetan Buddhist followers each year.

Karma is well-known in the Tibetan community for his work promoting Tibetan language and culture and for his disaster relief work after the earthquake in Qinghai Province in 2010 in which over 2,000 people died.

More about Tibet

Tibet, the remote and mainly-Buddhist territory is governed by China. Tibet has had a turbulent history. Sometimes it has been an independent country and sometimes it has been ruled by China and Mongolia. China sent in thousands of troops to enforce its claim on the region in 1950 and has frequently been accused of repressing the Tibetans (Source: BBC).

In the run up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics there were mass protests against Chinese rule. Since then the Chinese government has increased its repression of the Tibetans with strict military and security controls. Tibetan monks have been at the forefront of protests against the Chinese government and have been a key target of the crackdown.

TAKE ACTION

Please write as soon as possible:

- Urging the authorities to release the 16 other monks as they are being held solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression;
- Asking the authorities to ensure Karma Tsewang and the 16 monks are not tortured or ill-treated;
- Calling on the authorities to disclose where Karma Tsewang and the 16 monks are being held, and to ensure they have regular access to lawyers of their choosing.

Send your letters to:

Director of Tibet Autonomous Region Public Security Bureau
Li Zhao Tingzhang
Xizang Zizhiqu Gong'anting
26 Linkuodonglu
Lasashi 850000
Xizang Zizhiqu
People's Republic of China

Start your letter: *Dear Director*

Please check with us if you are sending your letters after the 19 February 2014 at student@amnesty.org.uk.

MORE INFORMATION

Amnesty's latest report on China (including Tibet):

<http://amnesty.org/en/region/china/report-2013>

BBC country profile:

<http://tinyurl.com/7phtzw2>

Amnesty International
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