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UN expert on food tells government of China not to force herders to sell their herd and resettle

The United Nation Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Mr. Olivier De Schutter, underlined that “herders should not, as a result of the measures adopted under the tuimu huancao policy, be put in a situation where they have no other options than to sell their herd and resettle.” The expert released his Preliminary Observations and Conclusions today upon the completion of his mission to the People’s Republic of China (PRC) from 15 - 23 December 2010.

The expert advised the government of PRC to engage in meaningful consultations with herding communities, assess past and current policies, examine all available

options in order to combine the knowledge of the nomadic herders of their territories. Tibetan nomads and farmers are entitled to their means of subsistence as stated in article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ratified by the PRC in 2001.

The official policies of tuimu huancao (“removing animals to grow grass”) and tuigeng huanlin (“Returning Farmland to Forest”) have created havoc in the lives of rural Tibetans. The policies have made huge negative impacts on the lives of rural Tibetans since 2000 as the state forcibly enforces the policies to displace rural

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Monk sentenced to three years prison term



SUNGRAB GYATSO

Kanlho Intermediate People’s Court sentenced Sungrab Gyatso, a monk of Mu-ra Monastery to three years prison term on 16 December 2010; according to information received at Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD).

Sungrab Gyatso was first arrested on 17 March 2008 from Machu County and was released after few days. On 18 May 2008 he was arrested again from Machu County but released. The last arrest was done on 25 March 2010 from Machu County and has been in prison till now.

The authorities accused him to be the leader of the peaceful protest by the

students in Machu County in March 2010.

Sungrab Gyatso, age 34, born in Mu-ra region, is a monk of Mu-ra Monastery in Machu County, Kanlho Prefecture ‘Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture’ ‘(TAP)’ Kansu. He is the editor of Rewa-kang-lam (Tib translation: March of Hope) magazine, also a member of the Bod-amae-rangke-larso-tsoekpa (tib trans: mother-tongue restoration) association. He is also a teacher at the Tsa-thang bod yig yig-mo sel-wae lobdae (tib trans: Eliminating the ignorance of Tibetan language in Tsathang) school.

Monks on the Run Escape into Exile

Lobsang Norbu, (30), Khedup Gyatso, (24), and Kunga Rinchen (26) are monks from Gonsar Monastery in Za-Khok Township, Derge County of Kardze "Tibet Autonomous Prefecture ("TAP"), Sichuan Province, who recently took refuge in India. The three of them have testified to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), that there is no freedom of religion and expression or basic human rights in Tibet. Exacerbating the matter, the government of China continues to make false and baseless accusations against the Dalai Lama. This led them to carry out a peaceful protest on 10 September 2009 in Za-khok Township and around monastery by putting up posters around the premises of the monastery. They put up the Tibetan national flag and posters stating that Tibet was an independent country.

The three of them wrote their names on the posters. This was so that the other monks and the public would not come under trouble from the authorities. After that they fled from the monastery hiding in nomadic areas, forest and the hills.

In order to secure the arrest of the three monks, the local Chinese police have announced a reward of 20,000 Yuan to

whoever gives information of their whereabouts, but later when they were not able to get any information the reward was increased to 50,000 Yuan. The police are also searching for them around the region.

The fear of arrest has forced them to leave their country on 7 October 2010. Walking for 23 days from Lhasa through the Nepal-Tibet border, they reached Katmandu on 30 October 2010. They arrived in Dharamsala, India, on 15 November 2010.



KUNGA RINCEN



LOBSANG NORBU



KHENDUP GYATSO

Tibetan political prisoner in critical health condition



Jigme Gyatso, serving 17 year sentence in Chushul prison near Lhasa is in critical health condition due to hardships and torture, according to information received by the Central Tibetan Administration.

In 1996, the Intermediate People's Court in Lhasa charged him with counter revolutionary activity along with a group of Tibetan residents of Lhasa. Jigme Gyatso was then imprisoned in Drapchi prison to serve a 15 year term with hard labour.

While in prison, Jigme Gyatso raised slogans of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's long life, this resulted in 2 year addition to his already 15 year term. He remained firm in his conviction for which he was severely tortured leaving him physically weak.

The severe beatings continued after he was shifted from Drapchi to Chusul prison and presently his survival is on stake due to the debilitating health condition.

Jigme was born in 1961 in Sangchu in Tibet's Amdo Province. He lived in Lhasa before the arrest and his mother passed away two years after he was arrested.

TCHRD Press Statement on the 62nd Anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Today, 10 December 2010, is the 62nd anniversary of proclamation of Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also a moment to celebrate the occasion of Mr. Liu Xiaobo receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway. The Tibetan people stand together with the millions of Chinese people in the struggle for human rights and freedom in the People's Republic of China (PRC). With enormous economic advancement in the past three decades, it is about time for genuine civil and political reforms to be introduced in the PRC.

China despite being a member of the UN Security Council and a signatory to the UN Charter continues to be one of the leading countries in the world in the violation of human rights particularly in restive regions like Tibet and east Turkestan. The government of China continues to "strike hard" against peaceful protesters and freedom of expression is severely curtailed in China today. Peaceful protesters are imprisoned without fair trial and often many are disappeared by the state and its agencies.

In January 2010, the Fifth CPC Central Committee and State Council meeting held in Beijing discussed upon how to bring development and long term stability in Tibet. Similarly, the Public Security Ministry of People's Republic of China (PRC) organized a two-day meeting of Public Security Bureaus of the ethnic Tibetan areas in present-day China covering the "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR") and the four provinces. This meeting assessed the results and experiences of "Upholding Public Security", and the "Struggle against the Current Separatist Movement": it also identified current challenges facing stability in Tibetan areas.

Likewise, this year there has been more arrests of intellectuals, monks, environmentalists and even singers. Not only were they arrested on unsubstantiated accusations, they were sentenced without fair trials or proper court proceedings. For example, Sonam Tsering, Pema Yeshe, Lama Lhaka, Soedo among others, were

sentenced to death with two years reprieve. Gekoe Jamphel Wangchuk, Tsewang Rigzin and Dorjee Tashi of Drepung Monastery were sentenced to life-imprisonment. Furthermore many others have also been imprisoned.

In Tibet today the Chinese Government is systematically violating the freedom of religion. In the monasteries across Tibet the Chinese officials are carrying out the Patriotic Re-education Campaign. When monks do not accept the campaign, they either have to face being arrested or sent back to their homes, in some cases it also lead to closing of the monastery.

The State Bureau of Religious Affairs has imposed the Law on the Management of Tibet Monasteries and the Practice of Religion. This law has completely disrupted the age-old workings of Tibetan monasteries. It has also broken the bond between the lama and his pupils. Most of the high Buddhist lamas are living in exile. Because of this new law it will become far more difficult for them to visit their monasteries in Tibet. This will increase the already huge gap between the lamas and their disciples in monasteries in Tibet. As a result, the entire religious system will suffer gravely.

On 19 October 2010 in Rebkong (Chinese: Tongren) county in Malho "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" ("TAP") in Qinghai province, thousands of Tibetan students came out in the streets to protest against the proposed education reforms and the inequality faced by Tibetans. The rally mainly voices out for the "Equality for Nationalities and Freedom for Language". This protest saw its ripple effect when the students in Beijing also protested. The meeting on education reform by the Education Department of Qinghai province, the local Communist Party Secretary and Chairman ordered that all subjects are required to be taught in Mandarin and all textbooks to be printed in Chinese except for Tibetan and English language classes.

Finally, it is not just the blatant violation

of religious freedom. The overall violation of the basic human rights of the Tibetan people in Tibet today under china's occupation is depressing. We, at the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), therefore, appeal to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to all governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations concerned with human rights to take an active interest in the grave and deteriorating human rights situation inside occupied Tibet. We appeal to you to please prevail on the government of china to release all the innocent prisoners who were arrested for peacefully practicing their religion. We appeal to you to help us locate all those who have been imprisoned in unknown locations. Also, even in the case of those who are being tried, we appeal to you to ensure that all these prisoners receive a fair and just trial.

One issue that calls for the immediate attention of world leaders is China's decision in Qinghai province to impose Chinese as the medium of education in the so-called Qinghai province - the north-eastern Tibetan province of Amdo where His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama was born. If urgent action is not taken now to seek the repeal of this law, it will soon be implemented in other parts of Tibet and this will bring drastic affects on Tibetan culture and the end of Tibetan national identity.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) would like to take this opportunity to pay our solidarity to the Tibetans who continue to suffer in Tibet. We would also like to express our deep and unending gratitude to all governments, leaders, organizations and individuals who have helped with and spoken up for the human rights situation in Tibet today.

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Tibetans in hundreds of thousands. The Tibetan nomads have been removed forcibly from their traditional dwelling places and often thrown into government made concrete houses, often with partial funding, with little subsidy as compensation for a limited time period. The knowledge and skills of the nomadic families passed over generations in living a dignified life in harmony with nature have been made useless through the official policies and they face enormous hardships as state's paltry compensation quickly runs out and lack of skill makes it hard for them to live in concrete houses and being made to indulge in urban economy by the state as shop keepers, drivers or construction workers.

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) in its June 2007 report No One Has the Liberty to Refuse on the forcible relocation of Tibetan herders in Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and the "Tibet Autonomous Region" recommended the government of PRC to impose a moratorium on all resettlements until a mechanism reviewing the resettlements, and its negative impact on the rights of herders, is put in place.

Following is extracted from the Special Rapporteur's Preliminary Observations and Conclusions under the heading Challenge 2. Ensuring Security of Tenure and Access to Land.

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier De Schutter

Nomadic herders in Western Provinces and Autonomous Regions, especially in the Tibet (Xizang) and Inner Mongolian Autonomous Regions, are another vulnerable group. The Grassland Law adopted in 1985 both in order to protect grassland and in order to modernize the animal husbandry industry towards commodification has now been complemented by a range of policies and programmes, including *tuimu huancao* ("removing animals to grow grass") and *tuigeng huanlin* ("Returning Farmland to Forest"). These programmes, part of the 1999 Western Development Strategy (*xibu da kaifa*), seek to address the degradation of pasture lands and control disasters in the low lands of China. They include measures such as grazing bans, grazing land non-use periods, rotational grazing and accommodation of carrying capacity, limitations on pastures distribution, compulsory fencing, slaughter of animal livestock, and the planting of eucalyptus trees on marginal farmland to reduce the threat of soil erosion. While there is little doubt about the extent of the land degradation problem, the Special Rapporteur would note that herders should not, as a result of the measures adopted under the *tuimu huancao* policy, be put in a situation where they have no other options than

to sell their herd and resettle.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights prohibits depriving any people from its means of subsistence, and the 1992 Convention on Biodiversity acknowledges the importance of indigenous communities as guarantors and protectors of biodiversity (Art. 8 j). China has ratified both of these instruments. The Special Rapporteur encourages the Chinese authorities to engage in meaningful consultations with herding communities, including in order to assess the results of past and current policies, and examine all available options, including recent strategies of sustainable management of marginal pastures such as the New Rangeland Management (NRM) in order to combine the knowledge of the nomadic herders of their territories with the information that can be drawn from modern science. The Special Rapporteur also encourages the Chinese authorities to invest in rehabilitating pasture, and to support remaining nomads with rural extension. The potential of livestock insurance programmes should also be explored, as tested successfully in Mongolia. Such programs, which pay nomads to restock and recover after a major disaster, encourage nomads to keep herds at much smaller scale as they would not fear losing their herding activity after such disasters if covered by such insurances.



A New Socialist Village in Kyegu Town (photo - IRENE BREIVIK)



UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier De Schutter

Teachers and students appeal to keep Tibetan as the primary language of instruction

The conference held at Rebkong (Ch: Tongren) from 11-16 October 2010 sparked a series of student protests in Qinghai. A series of protests broke out in the traditional Tibetan province of Amdo over the proposal to bring changes in the education system. The conference action plan intended to drastically sideline Tibetan language. Days before the protests broke out, over 300 teachers and students appealed to the authorities in a letter supporting a bilingual language policy where in teaching of Chinese language is supported, however, it called to keep Tibetan as the primary language and to teach all subjects in the Tibetan language. Following is translation of the letter by International Campaign for Tibet.

Raising the quality of nationality education requires adhering to teaching the mother tongue as the dominant language

Under the correct leadership of the Qinghai Province Department of Education, Tongren County in Huangnan Prefecture arranged and held Tibetan Language Course Reforms Training from October 11 to 16, 2010 for elementary and middle school teachers. More than 300 teachers from Tibetan elementary and middle schools across Qinghai province attended the training, and the outcomes of the training were exemplary. However, trainees engaged in deep discussions during the training, and consider that there must be thorough changes to the backward state of Tibetan education, requiring adherence to teaching of the mother tongue as the dominant language.

Violating regulations on teaching and study and not using a scientific medium of instruction are major factors restricting the quality of teaching and study at nationality elementary and middle schools. Our province's Tibetan students come from the vast farming and nomadic areas and have never been in a Chinese-language environment. Even though they have studied Chinese for several years by the time of their elementary school education,



Tibetan students protest in Chabcha on 19 and 20 October 2010

they cannot communicate in Chinese. If our province were to address such a group as this by adopting Chinese-language tuition, the outcome would be that the students would not understand what the teacher is saying, not to mention be able to actually learn anything. The choice of language of instruction should depend entirely on those being taught. The purpose of education is for teachers and students to convey and receive knowledge by the most easily understood

means between teachers and students. As far as the Tibetan students in our province are concerned, they are not familiar with Chinese and so they are not able to think about or express their ideas in Chinese, not to mention being able to use Chinese to creatively analyze problems. However, in daily life the Tibetan mother tongue is the most familiar tool for analyzing problems and expressing ideas, and therefore it should be the most effective tool for study in their



Over 500 Tibetan students of Minzu University of China protest on 22 October 2010. The slogan reads "Protection for Nationality Language, Propagation and promotion of Education in China"

lives at school. As an example, with regard to normal middle-school students, their mother tongue is Chinese, the language they are most familiar with, and they take to teaching in the Chinese language like a fish to water. But what would happen if the language of instruction we used for ordinary middle school students was English, with which they are unfamiliar? Obviously, the quality of education for the vast majority of ordinary middle school students would suffer significantly.

Using the mother tongue as the language of instruction for nationality elementary and middle school students does not imply a weakening of the Chinese language. Quite the contrary: aside from teaching classes such as Chinese and English using the mother tongue, the study of Chinese should be strengthened, and the study of English should gradually be strengthened. A Tibetan scholar put it well: if one wishes to stand up, one must study one's mother tongue well; if one wants to leave one's home, one must study Chinese well; if one wants to go out into the world, one must study English well – there is no point therefore in belaboring the importance of the Chinese language and script and the English language. Relatively speaking, in accordance with the realities in Tibetan areas it is more important to study Chinese. At present, there are many problems with the Chinese language and script as taught in Tibetan elementary and middle schools, such as with the teaching methods and the chosen teaching materials not conforming

to the real conditions of Tibetan students. In many places in our province, Tibetan students have studied Chinese for 10 or more years – from elementary school until upper middle school – but they are still unable to communicate in Chinese. In order to thoroughly change this situation, we must renew our understanding of how we can effectively teach Chinese to Tibetan students, and even carry out research into this topic. In many countries in the west, there has been much research into methods and materials for teaching English as a second language. As a result of this research, there have been positive outcomes in English teaching in non-English speaking countries. In recent years, our country has also adopted these teaching concepts and there have been great changes in English language teaching from the teaching methods to the teaching materials, which has made English language teaching more practicable, and increased students' interest in study. Such progressive foreign teaching methods should also be used for Tibetan students studying the Chinese language, and for teaching the Chinese language and script as a second language. The relevant education departments should formulate appropriate measures to this end, and focusing on the real conditions of Tibetan students, compile Chinese language and script materials and train Chinese language teachers in the new

teaching concepts and practices, thereby making Tibetan students' study of the Chinese language more effective and more practical.

But we cannot sacrifice the study of other subjects for the sake of properly studying the Chinese language and text and the English language. We should understand the difference between teaching a language and the language of instruction. The choice of which language is used for instruction should be decided entirely upon which language is not an obstacle to the student's studies. An individual's wisdom and their ability to analyze problems is intimately connected to the development of their language abilities. Therefore, in order to raise the quality of teaching and education and to amply reveal a person's intelligence, we should use a language of instruction most easily understood by the students, at the same time as strengthening the teaching of language itself. Therefore, all trainees maintain that it is scientific to continue using the mother tongue as the language of instruction.

The entire body of trainees at the Qinghai Province Elementary and Middle School Tibetan Language Course Reforms Training Class

October 15, 2010

The names and affiliations of the trainees are as follows: [names and affiliations withheld]



A student holds aloft a board with the slogan "Equality for Nationalities, Freedom of Language"



Students staging a sit-in

Three Writers Sentenced from three to four years in prison

The Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Intermediate People's Court sentenced three Tibetan writers from three to four years in jail for "inciting activities to split the nation". The three writers, Jangtse Donkho, Buddha and Kalsang Jinpa, were tried on 28 October 2010 and the verdict was passed on 30 December 2010. Jangtse Donkho and Buddha were given four years and Kalsang Jinpa was sentenced to three years in prison, according to Radio Free Asia (RFA).

The sentencing was arbitrary in nature as the writers were not represented by a lawyer of choice. The source inside Tibet had informed RFA, "None of the Tibetan writers or their lawyers or family members were allowed to speak in the court at the time of verdict.... "When the judge ordered all in the court to rise for the verdict, all three did not comply and remained seated."

The writers pleaded not guilty and Buddha pointed out that the sentence handed down to them was biased because

of their ethnicity as the kind of articles they wrote were also published by Han Chinese.

The writers were first detained in June and July 2010 for articles they wrote about the spring 2008 protests in Tibet in a local journal, *Shar Dungri* (*Eastern Snow Mountain*). Since 2008, over 60 Tibetan writers, bloggers and cultural figures have been jailed in Tibet by the Chinese authorities for the literary criticism they published or opinions they expressed on the internet.



Cover of the journal Shar Dungri



Buddha



Jangtse Donkho

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The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is an independent centre which aims to promote and protect human rights and a democratic polity for Tibet. It attempts to educate Tibetans on human rights principles and to work with other human rights and democracy groups as part of a worldwide movement towards these ends. TCHRD is registered under the Indian Societies Registration Act 21 of 1860 in 1996.

If you would like to subscribe to TCHRD's monthly Human Rights update or to order one of our publications, please send your name and postal details (including e-mail) to our office.

Partial list of TCHRD publications:

•The Next Generation: *The State of Education in Tibet Today* (1997) • Behind Bars: *Prison Conditions in Tibet* (1998) • Closing the Doors: *Religious Repression in Tibet* (1998) • *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Tibetan Translation) (1998) • *Democracy: An Education Booklet* (1998) • Fearless Voices: *Accounts of Tibetan Former Political Prisoners* (1998) • *Human Rights: An Education Booklet* (1998) • *A Guide to Human Rights* (1999) • *A guide to Democracy* (1999) • *Tales of Terror: Torture in Tibet* (1999) • *Briefing paper for travellers to Tibet* (1999) • *Torture and Ill-Treatment in Tibet* (2000) • *Racial Discrimination in Tibet* (2000) • *Impoverishing Tibetans: China's flawed economic policy* (2000) • *Destruction of Serthar Institute: A Special Report (2002)* • *Dispossessed: Land and Housing Rights in Tibet* (2002) • *Strike hard Campaign: China's crackdown on political dissidence* (2004) • *State of education in Tibet: A human rights perspective* (2004) • *Kuxing: Torture in Tibet* (2005) • *Death Penalty in China* (2005) • *International Bill of Human Rights* (2005) • *TCHRD 1996-2006: A Decade of Human Rights Research* • *Railway and China's Development Strategy in Tibet: A Tale of Two Economies* • *Prisoners of Tibet* • *Annual Report: Human Rights Situation in Tibet (1996 - 2008)* • *Uprising in Tibetan 2008* • *Briefing paper for travellers to Tibet*

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