Dear Kalsang,

This is the second one we did on the monks. You will notice how many different mechanisms we can use on the same cases. I will now do one to the Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance.

tashi delegs,

Ngagchoe

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31 August, 1999

By Electronic Mail

Ms. Asma Jahangir
Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights/3-072
United Nations
Palais Wilson
1201 GENEVA

Re: Deaths of three Tibetan monks

Dear Ms. Jahangir,

First of all, we would like to thank you and your staff for your continued expression of concern over the continued situation of extrajudicial or summary executions in Tibet as evident from your report to the 55th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

Based on new reports from Tibet, we wish to bring to your notice the following cases:

1) Twenty-two year old Norbu, who was from Langthang village in Lhundup county, the municipality of Lhasa, has died nearly three years after his release from Gutsa Prison, on the outskirts of Lhasa, the Tibetan capital. He was arrested on 25 February 1995 following a police raid on Nalanda Monastery, an important centre of the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism in Lhundup county, in the so-called "Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR)".

Reliable reports indicate that Norbu sustained damage to his kidneys as a result of the severe beatings he was subjected to during his year-long detention. The severity of the treatment he received appears to be linked to the arrest several days before of a monk Norbu regarded as his teacher at Nalanda, Sonam Dhondup (whose ordained name is Lobsang Phuntsok). According to one report, Norbu was treated particularly harshly because he refused to denounce Sonam Dhondup, who had been arrested on 22 February 1995 on suspicion of involvement in activities for Tibetan independence. Sonam Dhondup was later sentenced to 12 years in prison, according to unofficial reports.

During his period in custody - initially at the Pheno county prison and then at Gutsa prison - Norbu reportedly received no medical treatment, and was forced to carry out labour duties. According to a Tibetan who is now in exile, Norbu never recovered from the treatment he received in the prison. The same source stated that he was unable to work and was "no longer a complete human being" when he was returned home by the authorities. He died in the first Tibetan month of this year (February/March).

ii) Twenty-one year old Legshey Tsoglam was detained at Gutsa prison in early April this year because he refused to co-operate with a patriotic education campaign at Nalanda Monastery, which is approximately 25 km north of Lhasa. According to a source who is now in exile, Legshey Tsoglam was severely beaten when he was taken into detention, and he became "ill and weak". He died on 12 April, only days after his release from Gutsa.

Harsh treatment for Nalanda monks
The death of Lobsang Tsoglam following his resistance to the patriotic education campaign at Nalanda indicates a continuing tension at the monastery, which was raided by the police in February 1995 after the involvement of monks in activities for Tibetan. 34 monks at the monastery - at least eight of whom are currently serving sentences of between four and 12 years - were arrested following the raid, and officials at the monastery ordered the expulsion of 64 monks. The expelled monks were forbidden to join any other monastery or to "lead a religious life".

The wave of arrests in 1995 reportedly began when a monk called Nyima Kelsang was detained in Lhundup for wearing a badge depicting the Tibetan flag. Three Nalanda monks, including Sonam Dhondup, Norbu's teacher, visited the prison to deliver blankets for Nyima Kelsang. Sonam Dhondup was immediately detained on suspicion of putting up posters calling for Tibetan independence since 1992. He is reported to have been beaten and to have confessed to putting up the posters, telling Public Security Bureau (PSB), the Chinese police, that wood-blocks for printing posters were hidden at the monastery. Unofficial reports indicate that his long sentence was a result of his determination to take responsibility for the production of the posters so that the sentences of other monks would be lighter. Norbu's arrest took place three days after the arrest of his teacher.

The day after the detention of the two monks, 17 PSB officials arrived in three jeeps at the monastery to search the rooms of Sonam Dhondup and other monks, according to reliable reports. Many of the monks reacted strongly against the officials, with several refusing to allow them access. According to reports from monks who are now in exile, PSB officials managed to find one poster during their visit, and made no arrests. When they left, however, monks stoned their vehicles, and the PSB officials present are reported to have fired guns and volleys of tear gas in response.

Two days later, on 25 February 1995, the PSB returned with People's Armed Police personnel and officials from Lhundup county and carried out further arrests of monks for various offences including throwing stones at the PSB or on suspicion of involvement in producing or putting up pro-independence posters. Ten of the 34 Nalanda monks were sentenced to judicially imposed terms ranging from between three and 12 years at Drapchi prison for "separatist" activities that included the wearing of badges depicting the Tibetan national flag. Ten of the monks who confessed to throwing stones at the PSB were judicially sentenced to Utritru prison (known as "Lhasa Prison" by the authorities) for terms of between one and a half and two and a half years; four were sentenced to administrative detention at Trisam prison for between three months and one year; and six were held at Gutsa prison for periods of between one and five months.

Norbu was not the only Nalanda monk to suffer severe torture during detention, according to reports from some of the monks who are now in exile. A monk who was among the group taken to Utritru prison said that the soldiers escorting them from Lhundup PSB prison beat them severely. "There were some 30 soldiers escorting 12 of us," the monk witness said. "Our hands were tied behind our backs during the journey; one of the monks had his hands tied so tightly that the rope had to be cut off later with a knife." Other Nalanda monks were beaten with gun butts and whipped with wire while being taken into custody.

Another Nalanda monk who is now in exile said that severe incidents of abuse during his initial night of detention at the Lhundup PSB prison with other monks. "Our hands were tied to a plank, and a rope affixed to the plank tied to a beam in the ceiling," the monk said. "In this way we were alternately suspended in the air, then they would release the rope and we would fall on the hard floor. The pain was unbearable, as if we were dying."

The 1995 raid of the monastery was a result of the authorities' long-term concern over "splittist activities" at Nalanda Monastery over several years, according to an article in the Lhasa Evening News (Tibetan language edition), 25 March 1995. According to the newspaper, in August 1992, monks posted "reactionary" posters in the area and posted "reactionary slogans" on the gate of the county offices in Lhundup. "Nalanda monastery turned into a power base of the splittist network," stated the newspaper, in an article entitled the "Re-organisation of Nalanda monastery. The article announced that following the discovery of reactionary documents at the monastery in 1995 and the stoning of police who entered the monastery, the authorities set up a working committee to "re-organise" Nalanda. Local leaders in the Lhasa municipality participated in a meeting at the monastery on 15 March 1995 in order to "re-organise" monastery affairs following the disruption, the newspaper article said.
Tibet Bureau - Geneva, 04:21 PM 9/1/1999, Yet, another Submission

Ngawang Jinpa, from Gaden Monastery, outside Lhasa, died on 20 May this year after his release from Drapchi prison on 16 March following completion of his four-year sentence. He had been arrested on 17 March 1995 for political activities. According to a reliable source, his health was poor following his release, and the day after he returned home, officials visited him in order to carry out a medical procedure involving the extraction of some of his spinal fluid, a process which is normally a test for infection. It is not known whether Ngawang Jinpa was aware of the reason for this medical procedure. The extraction of spinal fluid can be carried out in order to test for tumours, meningitis (blood in the spinal fluid is a symptom of this disease), or any infection involving the brain and spinal fluid. The extraction of this fluid can also indicate raised intracranial pressure, which can be a result of being hit on the head. The removal of spinal fluid can cause splitting headaches, severe vomiting, loss of memory, insomnia and other symptoms in the patient. Comprehensive details of the medical condition of Ngawang Jinpa, who was from Lungshoe, Nangso Nubma in Phenpo, Lhundup county, are not known. Although he was initially taken to hospital following his release from detention, reliable reports indicate that he later died at home.

For your information, "Hostile Elements: A Study of Political Imprisonment in Tibet 1987-1999" by the London-based Tibet Information Network, documented 32 cases of political detainees known to have died as a result of abuse under detention from September 1987 to January 1999. The report stated that Tibetans who refuse to denounce the Dalai Lama or who actively express their support for him face greater risks than at any time since China embarked upon "reform and opening up" at the end of the 1970s.

In view of the unfortunate deaths of the above three Tibetan monks and our continued concern, we appeal to your office to consider an immediate intervention with the Chinese authorities. We hope that such interventions will encourage the Chinese authorities to eradicate these inhuman practices.

We thank your for your attention to this appeal.

Sincerely yours,

sd/-
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