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Death of Tibetan monk - Kalden - due to torture

1 message

Tenzin Norgay <tenzinnorgay@tchrd.org>

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To: urgent-action@ohchr.org

To, Dharamsala, India, 25 September 2009

Special Rapporteur on Torture
c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations Office at Geneva
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Dear Mr. Manfred Nowark,

With utmost respect the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) wishes to submit this allegation letter of death of a Tibetan monk due to torture in a Chinese prison.

A 32 year old Tibetan monk Ngawang Woepel alias Kalden died in mid August 2009 due to torture. In order to shun responsibility, the prison authorities handed him in near death condition to his family. In a few days time Kalden succumbed to injuries due to torture that he underwent in prison. As per the funeral practice in Tibet, his body was fed to vultures at the Drigung crematorium in Meldro Gungkar County near Lhasa.

Kalden was arrested on 12 March 2008 when a group of 300 monks from Drepung Monastery including him staged a demonstration against the Chinese rule in Tibet. Since his arrest nobody including his family members knew where he was being held till his death. The family members have been warned of serious consequences if they tried to raise any questions about Kalden's death. Even now they are denied the basic information as to where he was held until his death.

Kalden was born in Village No.8, Tso-doe Township, Phenpo Lhundup County, Lhasa Municipality City, "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR"). At the time of his death he was affiliated with the Drepung Monastery.

The family members and the TCHRD would be highly grateful to the office of your esteemed self if you could investigate with the Chinese authorities regarding the death of Kalden while in custody and bring the prison officials to justice.

We thank you,

Best regards,

Tenzin Norgay

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I. Identity of the person(s) subjected to torture

A. Family Name

B. First and other names: **Ngawang Woepel alias Kalden**

C. Sex: **Male**

D. Birth date or age: **32**

E. Nationality: **Tibetan**

F. Occupation: **Monk**

G. Identity card number (if applicable) **Below is a recent picture of him**



F. Activities (trade union, political, religious, humanitarian/ solidarity, press, etc.) **Political**

G. Residential and/or work address: **Drepung Monastery**

II. Circumstances surrounding torture

A. Date and place of arrest and subsequent torture

Kalden was arrested on 12 March 2009 when a group of around 300 monks from Drepung Monastery including Kalden staged demonstration against the Chinese authorities in Lhasa, "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR"). Since his arrest, Kalden was never seen until days before his death. It was not known where he was imprisoned.

B. Identity of force(s) carrying out the initial detention and/or torture (police, intelligence services, armed forces, paramilitary, prison officials, other)

Lhasa Public Security Bureau

C. Were any person, such as a lawyer, relatives or friends, permitted to see the victim during detention? If so, how long after the arrest?

No one was allowed to see him in prison.

D. Describe the methods of torture used

E. What injuries were sustained as a result of the torture?

He died while in custody. His family members allege that he died due to torture as he was in near death condition when prison officials allowed family members to meet him. He died immediately after the meeting.

F. What was believed to be the purpose of the torture?

Any Tibetan who has been arrested for political crimes against the state are met with harsh treatments. Kalden was a strong Tibetan nationalist and quite outspoken about his beliefs on freedom and human rights in Tibet. It is an established fact that Tibetans who do not conform to the government's political stance are tortured brutally in the network of detention centres and prisons in Tibet. Kalden underwent torture for his strong political opinions.

G. Was the victim examined by a doctor at any point during or after his/her ordeal? If so, when? Was the examination performed by a prison or government doctor?

No doctor examined Kalden during his detention and also after his death.

H. Was appropriate treatment received for injuries sustained as a result of the torture?

No treatment was received.

I. Was the medical examination performed in a manner which would enable the doctor to detect evidence of injuries sustained as a result of the torture? Were any medical reports or certificates issued? If so, what did the reports reveal?

No medical examination was conducted.

J. If the victim died in custody, was an autopsy or forensic examination performed and which were the results?

The victim died in custody in mid August 2009. According to credible information no autopsy was conducted. His body was handed over to his family who later offered the body to vultures (Tibetan Buddhist offer dead bodies to vultures as part of their burial system. This system is popularly known as Sky Burial in Tibet) at the Drigung crematorium at Meldro Gongkar County near Lhasa.

III. Remedial action

Were any domestic remedies pursued by the victim or his/her family or representatives (complaints with the forces responsible, the judiciary, political organs, etc.)? If so, what was the result?

Due to utter fear of further reprisal on the living members of the family, they did not approach any judicial organ. The police had warned them of dire consequences if they fail to abide by the police orders not to raise any voice over the death of Kalden in custody.

IV. Information concerning the author of the present report:

A. Family Name

B. First Name: **Mr. Tenzin Norgay**

C. Relationship to victim

D. Organization represented, if any **Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy**

E. Present full address: **Top Floor, Narthang Building, Gangchen Kyishong, Dharamsala,
H.P.-176215, India**