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THE TIBET BUREAU

Office of the Representative of H.H. the Dalai Lama
(United Nations Affairs)

29/8/96

Registered Letter

Mr. Nigel Rodley
UN Special Rapporteur on Torture
Centre for Human Rights - D 102
Palais des Nations
1211 GENEVA 10

Dear Sir,

Tibet Bureau would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for the continued concern in your reports to the UN Commission on Human Rights over the situation of the practice of torture in Tibet.

In this submission, we would like to draw your attention to the following cases in Tibet:

1. **Kelsang Thutop**, aka Badgro or by ordination name Jamphel Khedup (aged 49), died under controversial circumstances at Drapchi Prison on 5 July 1996. A monk of Drepung monastery, he was sentenced on 30 November 1989 to 18 years of imprisonment after being accused of being the "main culprit" in founding a "counterrevolutionary clique" and "spreading counterrevolutionary propaganda."

Kelsang Thutop, who came from Sangda in Toelung district, was one of the four leading members of a secret pro-democracy group in Drepung monastery which had printed a famous booklet, "The Precious Democratic Constitution of Tibet", as well as a Tibetan edition of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

Kelsang Thutop was not allowed to have visitors for at least 5 years of his sentence when he was working as a cook in the prison kitchen. Some report suggest that in 1993 when friends tried to visit him at Drapchi prison, prison officials said that he was no longer held there.

Amnesty International reported on 26 July that the monk, who had suffered from high blood pressure, called on the authorities to launch an investigation into allegation that the monk had died as a result of lack of medical treatment.

2. **Sangye Tenphel**, died on 6 May 1996, nine months after he was sentenced and transferred from an identified prison to Drapchi Prison. The monk, whose lay name was Gonpo Dorje, had been arrested on 15 April, 1995 while staging a demonstration in Lhasa with four other monks of Khangmar Monastery in Damshung, 162 kilometres north-west of Lhasa, the Tibetan capital.

Sangye Tenphel was said to have died after being by prison officials who had found him writing posters or a letter calling for Tibetan independence. The prison personnel who tortured him were identified were: Nyima; Migmar; Tsenam and Paljor.

3. **Tsewang Palden**, a retired carpenter aged 65, escaped to Nepal to claim asylum in June 1995 but was deported back to Tibet by the Nepalese authorities in the same month. Tsewang Palden had been sentenced to 6 years imprisonment for "trying to split the motherland" but was released earlier in 1994 due to international pressure and intervention.

Reports now confirm that Tsewang Palden was held at Gutsa Prison upon deportation until 14 February 1996, when he was transferred to Drapchi Prison. "He is being held in a small, narrow cell," said one recent report from the Tibetan capital. This suggests that he is being held in solitary confinement as a punishment for attempting to flee Tibet.

4. **Ngawang Pekar** (Pelkar), a 34-year-old monk of Drepung monastery was sentenced to 8 years on 7 December 1989, had his sentence increased by six years at a trial on 13 March 1996, for "spying" after he was caught by Drapchi Prison officials trying to smuggle a list of prisoners out of the prison.

After the list was discovered he was placed in solitary confinement for 4 months in 1995.

5. **Kelsang Gyaltzen**, a 29-year-old monk of Dingkhong monastery in Damshung, serving a 6 year sentence for taking part in a demonstration in 1991, was also kept in solitary confinement for 2 months last year for helping in the attempt to smuggle out the prisoner list from Drapchi Prison.

6. In recent months, tight control was imposed on the political prisoners held at Drapchi Prison, whereby more stringent regulations have been introduced. Barring meal hours, all the prisoners have to be in queue, and are forcibly made to run for hour together. During this "forced running" all the prisoners were made to chant "unite the motherland."

If the prison staff happened to find any act of the prisoners which do not please their eyes, two to three prison guards indiscriminately beat the prisoners from all sides. These beatings were so cruel, that a monk belonging to Khangmar monastery had his ribs broken.

Other cases include, a monk named **Ngawang Sherab** from Kyarlung monastery who was beaten so severely that his hands were irreparably broken while a monk from Dakhopogong Monastery named **Dhoelo** was also crippled due to the beatings. **Phuntsok Thutop** and **Phuntsok Dadrak**, two monks of Drepung Monastery also had

to endure immense suffering because of torture sustained under similar circumstances, the reports say.

7. **Dhudul Dorje and 12 Others:** Dhudul Dorje is a 46 year old nomad from Kyigudho in north-eastern Tibet (Chinese: Yushu, in Qinghai Province). He was detained in the border town of Dram by the Chinese police in November 1994.

He was held with 12 others in Dram, where he was detained and questioned for seven days. During the detention the detainees were beaten with electric batons by police. The prisoners were then sent to Lhasa, where they were imprisoned for fourth months. During this time they were questioned every day, mainly about their reasons for trying to escape Tibet. They were accused of being "splittists and being followers of the Dalai clique." Dhudul Dorje was questioned up to three times a day, given electric shocks and beaten.

He has now been released.

8. **Karma Tenzin Gyurme,** a 25 year old lama from Dherge in Kham, first reached Nepal in April 1995, but was caught by the Nepalese police and deported to Dram, Tibet.

His account of his deportation and time in prison describes at least 200 Tibetans imprisoned in Shigatse for trying to travel abroad, including some who had legal Chinese travel documents. One of the prisons in which he was held was in the town of Lhatse. He described being beaten for saying prayers:

"The prison in Lhatse is situated at the back of the military camp. There we were asked questions again about our identity and so on, just like before, by military people and by Gong An (Police). We went in one by one. Sometimes you would be slapped. Then you had to hold a written board in front of you [with your name] while they took picture. Once I was caught reciting my daily prayers. I was taken outside the cell. Four soldiers stood two on each side of me and pushed me from one side to the other. At the same time they beat me."

The lama escaped from custody after two months while being transferred to another prison and succeeded in reaching Kathmandu in September 1995.

9. **Sherab Drakpa,** 25 year old monk from Kham (south-eastern Tibet) was deported by the Nepalese authorities in April 1995. He was held first at a police station in Dram for seven days.

"During all that time they didn't give us any food nor water. We were handcuffed to a bar on the wall; the younger children who had not been handcuffed could pour in our mouth a little of tsampa [roasted barley flour] that was left in our bags. There were 7 children; from about 7 to 10."

For the following eight days the prisoners were held in a military camp in Dram. "We spent 8 days there, again without being given any food at all, just some water. We could

send one person to buy a few biscuits; we had very little money left [because all our money had been stolen by the Nepalese police].

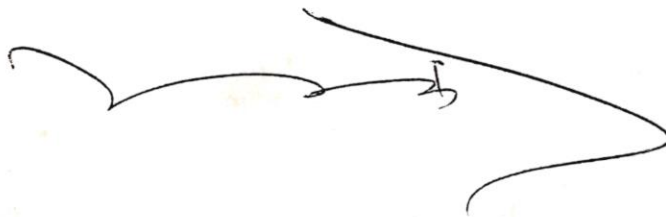
They were moved to Shigatse prison, where they were held for another 8 days. "They asked questions every day and really ill-treated us, with electric prods, sticks, beating and kicking each of us."

Drakpa later escaped while in transit to another prison and was able to reach Nepal successfully on 6 November, 1995.

10. **Ngawang Choephel**, a 30-year-old Tibetan musician from India was arbitrarily detained by the Chinese authorities in August 1995 and is now reportedly being held at Nyari Prison in Shigtse. He was detained while doing research on traditional Tibetan music and songs and Tibetan opera. Tibet Bureau fears that he has been tortured during interrogation sessions, particularly when he came from India.

Under these circumstances, Tibet Bureau for UN Affairs, would highly appreciate if your office can immediately intervene on behalf of the political prisoners of Tibet. Tibetan Government in Exile calls on the Chinese authorities to give detailed information about the real cause for the untimely deaths of Ven. Kelsang Thutop and Ven. Sangye Tenphel.

Sincerely yours,



Ngawang C. Drakmargyapon
HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICERS

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