

Self-immolations continue in Tibet and spread to Tibet's capital, Lhasa



An image reportedly of Sunday's self-immolation(s) in Lhasa that has been circulating on Weibo.

On 27 May 2012, two young Tibetan men set fire to themselves outside one of Tibet's holiest shrines, the Jokhang Temple, in the first self-immolation in Lhasa, Tibet's historic capital. The Chinese state media reported that one of the Tibetans died, while another is still alive. The two men who immolated together, Dorje Tseten from Labrang (Chinese: Xiahe) in Gansu and Dargye, from Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) in Sichuan, worked in a restaurant in Lhasa.

The self-immolations took place during Saga Dawa, an important religious period for Tibetan Buddhists that commemorates the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death and amidst the heightened security presence in Lhasa, which includes visible military presence in the streets and additional controls imposed on the Internet and

telephone lines. On 24 May, the official newspaper Tibet Daily warned Tibetans that commemorating Saga Dawa that week would be regarded as a "serious violation" of "political discipline and stability work." On 4 June, Tibet expert Robbie Barnett stated in a Twitter message (@RobbieBarnett) that "with Sagadawa festival on 4th, tonight all tourists in hotels in Barkor near Jokhang Temple were made to move elsewhere." According to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (www.tchrd.org), an unspecified number of Tibetans have been detained following the twin self-immolation protests in Lhasa. Sources told TCHRD that Tibetans who fail to show their temporary stay permit (Chinese: Zan Zhu Zheng) – that confirm their legal stay in Lhasa – are being detained. The detainees include Tibetans visiting Lhasa on a temporary

basis from other Tibetan areas outside the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Tibetans who are from Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) Prefecture are especially targeted, apparently due to the fact that Dhargye hails from Ngaba.

On the afternoon of 30 May, a Tibetan nomadic woman set herself on fire and died near Jonang monastery in Dzamthang (Chinese: Rangtang) in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Dzamthang is one of the sites where protests took place earlier this year and where rights groups believe at least six people were killed and 60 injured. Rikyo was a mother of three children and died straight away. A large number of Tibetans gathered to pray for Rikyo and some Tibetan sources

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said the total number was as high as several thousand, including monks and laypeople. Likewise, on 15 June Tamdin Thar, a Tibetan from a nomadic family, set himself on fire in front of the People's Armed Police base in Chentsa, Malho (Chinese: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, according to Tibetan sources in exile. Armed police were seen extinguishing the flames as Tamdin Thar lay on the ground, still moving slightly, and he was then taken away in a vehicle by security forces. According to Tibetan sources in exile in touch with Tibetans in the area, he died within hours, and local people gathered



Tamdin Thar's two sons and Sonam Dhargay's son

in the town calling for the return of his body, despite an increasing number of armed police being deployed. The

body was returned to local people at around mid-day today, according to various sources (more information at <http://tinyurl.com/d3xmwhn>). ■

See also:

- ▶ ICT report: <http://tinyurl.com/bp3yznt>
- ▶ Amnesty International Press Release: <http://tinyurl.com/ctqe6z5>
- ▶ Article by Edward Wong: <http://tinyurl.com/blro26j>
- ▶ BBC Documentary on Self-Immolations: <http://tinyurl.com/cuyo6jz>

Kalon Tripa Accepts Resignations of Special Envoy Lodi G. Gyari and Envoy Kelsang Gyaltzen

Press release by the Central Tibetan Administration, <http://www.tibet.net>

Kalon Tripa Dr. Lobsang Sangay, Head of the Central Tibetan Administration, regretfully accepted the resignations of the Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama Lodi G. Gyari and Envoy Kelsang Gyaltzen. The resignations became effective June 1, 2012.

Special Envoy Lodi Gyari, assisted by Envoy Kalsang Gyaltzen, led the Tibetan team in nine rounds of talks with the representatives of the Chinese government starting in 2002. The last meeting with the Chinese side took place more than two years ago in January 2010. Despite Mr. Gyari's desire to step down in April 2011, the two envoys were asked to continue their efforts to reach out to their Chinese counterparts by Kalon Tripa-elect Dr. Lobsang Sangay. The envoys met and briefed the Kalon Tripa on twelve separate occasions since May 2011.

At the Task Force meeting on May 30-31, 2012 in Dharamsala, the envoys expressed their utter frustration over the lack of positive response from the Chinese side and submitted their resignations to the Kalon Tripa. "Given the deteriorating situation inside Tibet since 2008 leading to the increasing

cases of self-immolations by Tibetans, we are compelled to submit our resignations. Furthermore, the United Front did not respond positively to the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan people presented in 2008 and its Note in 2010. One of the key Chinese interlocutors in the dialogue process even advocated abrogation of the minority status as stipulated in the Chinese constitution thereby seeming to remove the basis of autonomy. At this particular time, it is difficult to have substantive dialogue," stated the two envoys in their resignation letter.

"I have known both the Special Envoy Lodi G. Gyari and Envoy Kelsang Gyaltzen for many years. They have worked extremely hard in challenging circumstances and made earnest efforts to move the dialogue process forward and resolve the issue of Tibet peacefully. Their contributions during their decade-long

leadership of the Tibetan negotiating team have been invaluable. The Kashag will continue to rely on them for their wise counsel. They will remain as senior members of the Task Force team," said Kalon Tripa Dr. Lobsang Sangay.

The Kashag urges Beijing to accept the Middle-way Approach, which seeks genuine autonomy for Tibetans within the People's Republic of China (PRC) and within the framework of the Chinese constitution. This is a win-win proposition, which contributes to PRC's unity, stability, harmony, and its peaceful rise in the world.

The Tibetan Task Force on Negotiations will be expanded and will meet again in December 2012 to discuss the Chinese leadership transition with the hope of continuing to dialogue with the new Chinese leaders to resolve the issue of Tibet peacefully.

The Tibetan leadership remains firmly committed to non-violence and the Middle-Way Approach, and strongly believes that the only way to resolve the issue of Tibet is through dialogue. The Tibetan leadership considers substance to be the primary and process as secondary, and is ready to engage in dialogue anywhere and at anytime. ■

The European Parliament adopts resolution on Tibet

On 14 June 2012 the European Parliament passed a resolution on Tibet (see: <http://tinyurl.com/cqemtpe>) where it criticizes human rights abuses in Tibet demanding that China reveal the whereabouts of all the victims of self-immolation and calling for unrestricted access for media and human rights monitors. It also asks the EU Foreign Affairs Policy chief Lady Ashton to step up efforts to tackle the abuses and appoint a Special EU Coordinator for Tibet.

On 12 June, HR/VP Catherine Ashton made strong remarks on EU Tibet policy to the plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France. During the debate, Mr. Thomas Mann (EPP), Ms. Ana Gomes (S&D), Ms. Kristiina Ojuland (ALDE) and Ms. Eva Lichtenberg (Greens) addressed the Plenary presenting different aspects of the current situation in Tibet and calling on the European Union to sustain Tibetans' resilience. ■

See also:

- ▶ Ashton's statement on Tibet: <http://tinyurl.com/bqw4fac>
- ▶ ALDE's Press Release: <http://tinyurl.com/czkfo9c>

EU and China hold dialogue on human rights

The European Union and the People's Republic of China held the 31st round of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue on 29 May 2012 in Brussels. Press release of the Dialogue is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/cdyfv7v> ■

Dalai Lama meets with British Prime Minister and Austrian Chancellor



UK Prime Minister David Cameron and his Deputy Nick Clegg with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

On 14 May 2012, the Dalai Lama met British Prime Minister David Cameron and his deputy in the ruling coalition, Nick Clegg. In response to the stormy reaction from Beijing to the meeting, the British government said that it was up to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister to choose with whom they meet.

Earlier in the day, the Dalai Lama received a major award, the Templeton Prize (<http://www.templetonprize.org>), in a ceremony at St Paul's Cathedral in London. The prize was awarded in recognition of the Dalai Lama's achievements in spirituality and science. The Dalai Lama became the second person, alongside Mother Teresa, to be honoured with both the Nobel Peace Prize and Templeton Prize, which, while lesser-known, is the largest single annual financial award given to an individual by a philanthropic organization.

During his visit to Austria, on 26 May the Dalai Lama met Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann. Faymann dismissed warnings from the Chinese government that its relations with Vienna could be threatened if he met with the exiled spiritual leader. The Austrian Chancellor stated "Austria is a country which has always shown itself to be on the side of human rights, and I alone am responsible for my agenda" and said that he was personally interested in meeting such an "eminent figure" as the Dalai Lama. Kalon Tripa Dr. Lobsang Sangay was also in Austria and during a press conference where both figures were present he called upon the European Union to send an investigative team to areas where self-immolations of Tibetans have occurred. Furthermore, he reiterated that Tibetans are ready and willing to resume formal dialogue with the Chinese government and seek the implementation of genuine autonomy within Chinese border and in respect of the Chinese constitution. ■

See also:

- ▶ Templeton prize's ceremony and media panel: <http://tinyurl.com/bvtzjbn>
- ▶ ICT Report: <http://tinyurl.com/c3x7nbz>

6th World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet held in Ottawa, Canada



Panel discussion - From the left, Senator Consiglio di Nino, Mr. Carl Gershman, Mr. Jayadeva Ranade, Mr. Richard Gere, Ms. Sharon Hom

From 27 to 29 April 2012, Parliamentarians from around the world gathered in Canada's capital city of Ottawa for the 6th World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet. The 5th edition of the Convention was held in Rome in November 2009 and resolved to form the International Network of Parliamentarians on Tibet (INPaT - <http://inpatnet.org>) to facilitate the coordination among parliamentarians and parliamentary groups in order to advance Tibet issues in a concerted manner.

The 6th Convention, hosted by the Canadian Senator Consiglio di Nino, witnessed the participation of legislators from Asia, Europe, the Americas, Africa and Oceania, who were joined by prominent speakers from China, Tibet, India, the USA, Canada and elsewhere.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressed the inaugural session of the Convention and he said he regarded all the participants of the Convention as supporters of truth. His Holiness then gave the history of the devolution of his authority, from 2001 when he had become semi-retired to 2011 with the election of Kalon Tripa Lobsang Sangay and his complete retirement.

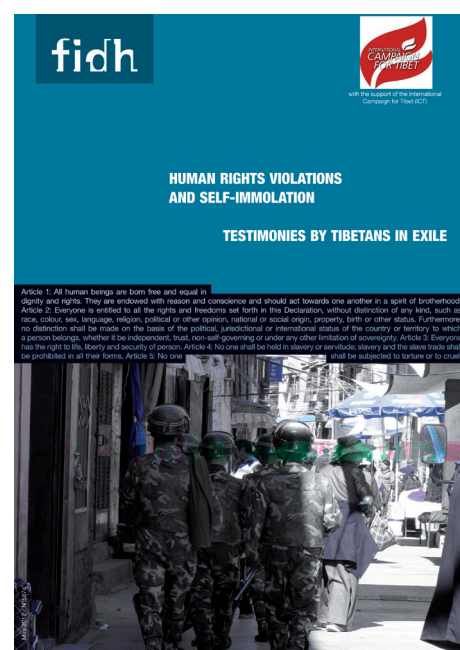
Many Members of the Tibetan Parliament in-exile (TPiE) were also present and the Speaker of the TPiE, Mr. Penpa Tsering, intervened and stressed the importance of strengthening relations between Tibetan MPs and MPs from different countries. Representatives of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) participated in the Convention, including Kalon Tripa Dr. Lobsang Sangay and DIIR Kalon Dicki Chhoyang, who were given the floor to present the new challenges for the CTA in the years ahead.

INPaT's Co-Chairs Mr. Thomas Mann and Mr. Matteo Mecacci were both present and had a remarkable role in fostering the network, its activities and advance

FIDH-ICT publish joint report

On 16 May 2012 the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) co-published with the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) a report focusing on testimonies from Tibetan asylum seekers in Europe: « *Human rights violations and self-immolation: Testimonies by Tibetans in exile* » available in English and French at <http://fidh.org/Human-rights-violations-and-self>. It presents a selection of six testimonies from Tibetan asylum seekers in Europe. The testimonies are based on thirty interviews carried out by FIDH throughout 2011 in Belgium, France and Switzerland – the three European countries hosting the largest number of Tibetans.

It aims to contribute to documenting human rights violations in Tibet in a context where independent observers, foreign researchers, human rights activists and journalists are not allowed to operate in the country. ■



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Political prisoners focus

Lo Lo



Tibetan singer Lo Lo

The International Secretariat of OMCT (World Organisation Against Torture) and The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), a member of OMCT SOS-Torture Network, have expressed concern at the case of Tibetan singer Lo Lo (29). According to the organizations, on 19 April 2012, Lo Lo was arrested and taken to an unknown location by local police officers of Dhomda village, in Trindu (Chinese: Chengdu) County, Jyekundo (Chinese: Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. His whereabouts and fate since then are unclear.

According to the same sources, Lo Lo released an album titled "Raise the Tibetan Flag, Children of the Snow land" a few months earlier. The album reportedly contains 14 songs with lyrics calling for Tibet's independence, unity of the Tibetan people and the return of his Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet. It is believed that Lo Lo was arrested as a direct result of his political songs. ■

This number's reading suggestion

"Escape to Freedom" by Naomi C. Rose

"Escape to Freedom" is the true and inspiring story of the thousands of Tibetan youth fleeing their homeland in search of cultural freedom and education. Many of them flee without their parents, some without any adult at all. The brave youth in this book endured untold hardships in Chinese-occupied Tibet. On their journey to freedom, they risked imprisonment, injury, and death. Once they reached freedom, they faced lives as refugees in a country with new customs, food, and languages. More children and teens follow in their footsteps everyday.

Using stories, interviews, and photos from Birgit van de Wijer's book "Child Exodus from Tibet", Naomi C. Rose portrays the compelling truth about these brave youth.

Naomi is an award-winning author, artist, and storyteller. She dedicates her writing and artwork to stories of wisdom and peace for children of all ages. Birgit van de Wijer is active in the Tibetan cause since 1998 and author of the books: "Child Exodus from Tibet" (2006) and "Tibet's Forgotten Heroes. The story of Tibet's resistance against China" (2010). "Escape to Freedom" is available on www.amazon.com or www.naomicrose.com ■

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the adoption of a Declaration and Action Plan to renovate the network's support to the Tibetan cause and define a set of priorities to coordinate different parliaments' work on Tibet.

Parliamentarians adopted the Ottawa Declaration (<http://tinyurl.com/czb4z2d>) that draws attention to the repressive policies in Tibet and serious pattern of human rights violations there and to China's destruction of the Tibetan people's identity, as evidenced by the attacks on Tibetan Buddhism, language, culture and forced relocation of Tibetan nomadic herders. It expresses deep sorrow for the many Tibetans who self-immolated to protest these policies and calls for Tibetan freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Furthermore, the Declaration emphasizes the importance of resuming the dialogue between representatives of the Dalai Lama and Chinese authorities and commends the newly elected Tibetan political leader for reaffirming his commitment to the vision of the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach as the best solution to the Tibet issue. ■

Upcoming Events

▶ 20 June 2012, 10:45-12:00:

Expert panel discussion on cultural genocide in Tibet, Press Club Brussels Europe (<http://brusselspressclub.eu>)

▶ 18 June - 6 July 2012:

20th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, Geneva, Switzerland

▶ 21 June 2012:

Press conference on cultural genocide in Tibet, side event organized in the venue of the Human Rights Council, Geneva, Switzerland