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China protests."*

-HH the 14th Dalai Lama

Merkel Receives Dalai Lama Despite Chinese Threats



Defying pressure from China, German Chancellor Angela Merkel held an historic meeting with the Dalai Lama on 23 September in Berlin, the first time a German chancellor has received the Dalai Lama. Ms. Merkel met previously with the Dalai Lama during a visit to Germany in 2005 while she was leader of the opposition.

"The chancellor paid tribute to the Dalai Lama as a religious leader and assured him of support for his efforts to preserve the cultural identity of Tibet and for his peaceful quest for religious and cultural autonomy...The 1989 Nobel Peace prize winner stressed the peaceful, non-violent nature of his engagement, which expressly excludes striving for independence for Tibet from the People's Republic of China," Merkel's spokesman Ulrich Wilhelm said afterwards.

Speaking to the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper, the Dalai Lama commented on China's threats to the German government, saying "It is simply China's attitude. It is the arrogance of power. Wherever I go, China protests...I believe that in the long run, international opinion will have a positive influence on the Chinese government. The more sensitive among the country's political leaders realise that their image in the outside world depends strongly on how they treat Tibet."

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great interest in continuing, intensifying and promoting our good ties," but defended Merkel's right to meet the Tibetan leader, saying that "such talks should be made possible without causing strains to our good relations."

Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi canceled a planned breakfast with his German counterpart, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, at the annual United Nations General Assembly in New York, citing "scheduling reasons," while a Chinese delegation also canceled its planned attendance at an annual conference on bilateral judicial issues in Munich because of "technical reasons," the German Justice Ministry said.

Prior to his meeting with Chancellor Merkel, the Dalai Lama met with Austrian Chancellor Gusenbauer in Vienna, and on 17 October President Bush will attend a ceremony to bestow the Congressional Gold Medal, the USA's highest civilian honour, on the Dalai Lama. Canada's Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, has also announced his intention to meet the exiled Tibetan leader despite objections from China. ■

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LITHANG CRACKDOWN CONTINUES:

Execution, New Arrests and Patriotic Education

Tensions have increased in the Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) area of eastern Tibet, present-day Sichuan province, with the execution of a Tibetan prisoner that may be linked to the political crackdown following a protest in support of the Dalai Lama by nomad Runggye Adak in August (see *Tibet Brief 05, September 2007*).

A new ICT report (available at www.savetibet.org) documents the following new developments in the region:

- Further detentions of Tibetans, including a young art teacher, a local nomad who expressed support for Runggye Adak and the Dalai Lama, and a senior monk respected for his commitment to Tibetan education – all in the Lithang area.
- An increased and intimidatory military presence in the two neighboring counties of Lithang and Kardze, both in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (in the Tibetan area of Kham).
- An intensified political campaign that requires Tibetan monks, nuns, laypeople and children to denounce the Dalai Lama. The stepping up of this anti-Dalai Lama campaign in the region coincides with a period when the Dalai Lama himself is increasingly received by world leaders and respected for his leadership on peace and non-violence.

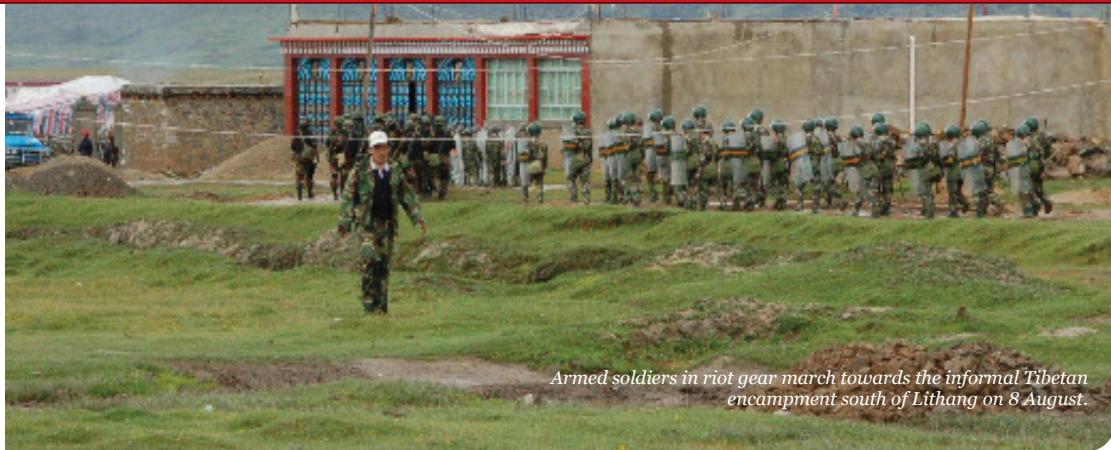
According to reports received by ICT, a Tibetan named Kunjam was executed on or around September 14 in Lithang. Kunjam had initially been detained in 2003, because of his involvement in a fight with two Chinese men over an issue of land according to one report from a Tibetan source. The two Chinese men were apparently investigating the possibility of mineral extraction at a local mountain that is regarded by Tibetans as a holy

site. Although the full circumstances are not known, it appears that one of the Chinese men was killed and Kunjam was linked to the death and imprisoned. It is not known if he was initially sentenced to death. But reports received by ICT indicate that his execution was hasty and unexpected, and may have been linked to the authorities' hardline approach towards political dissent in his local area through August and September.

Tibetans in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (in the Tibetan region of Kham) are known for their strong sense of Tibetan identity and nationalism; many Khampas were involved in resistance to the Chinese invasion in 1949-50. Hardline Chinese campaigns against the Dalai Lama and economic policies that have led to the loss of their land and livelihoods as well as the extraction of minerals by Chinese prospectors have caused deep resentment in the region. The recent intensification of restrictions on religious expression, and the requirement to denounce the Dalai Lama, have compounded frustration in the region and appear to be increasing the likelihood of Tibetans taking risks to express their discontent.

Since the August unrest, there has been a buildup of hundreds of troops in Lithang county, particularly in the main Lithang town. A high-ranking Chinese official together with security personnel and other Chinese cadres have also arrived in Lithang, according to Tibetan sources. At least two senior Tibetan leaders in Lithang who work for the local government have lost their jobs, which sources say could be indicative of distrust at higher levels of their ability to remain loyal to government rulings at a time of intensified oppression of local people.

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LITHANG CRACKDOWN...

According to reports from sources close to unfolding events in the area, Chinese cadres have presided over political sessions in Lithang monastery, and in local government offices as well as with leaders of nomad groups. During these meetings, Tibetans have been told that they must denounce the Dalai Lama or risk imprisonment. One Tibetan source said: "The main points of the meeting are always the same: denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama, oppose the 'separatist clique', of which Runggye Adak is said to be a part, and finally, to be grateful to the Communist government." The same source added that armed military personnel have been present at many of the meetings in order to increase levels of intimidation.

Local people have been required to make denunciations of the Dalai Lama and of Runggye Adak's protest, while children in local schools have been asked to write essays denouncing the Dalai Lama and his 'separatist clique'.

An American Buddhist scholar and practitioner who has traveled frequently to Tibet told ICT: "It is devastating for a Tibetan to be required to denounce the Dalai Lama. A basic vow of a Tibetan monk, nun, or lay practitioner is to deeply respect and always maintain a heart connection with the teacher...It is one thing for Chinese officials to denigrate the Dalai Lama in front of Tibetans, but it is immensely distressing for Tibetans to be forced to do so themselves."

During one meeting last week, a senior Tibetan monk at Lithang monastery reportedly refused to denounce the Dalai Lama. There are reports from the area of other refusals from Tibetans to submit to the demands of the cadres carrying out the patriotic education sessions. Feelings are running high in the area, and some sources have expressed fears that the crackdown may worsen

due to the confrontational strategies used by the authorities.

A Tibetan from the area who is now in exile told ICT: "They tell us that if you are with the Chinese government than there should not be space for Dalai Lama in your heart. These campaigns are aimed at changing peoples' minds, and when they can't coerce people into submission they just arrest them. It is supposed to go on till they get a clear answer from the public on the proposed choice - the Party or the Dalai Lama. The people of Lithang are facing a difficult dilemma and are under increasing pressure and restriction. I personally believe that the situation might escalate and become very serious." ■

EP CONFERENCE ON TIBET, 8 NOVEMBER

The Tibet Intergroup of the European Parliament, the International Campaign for Tibet and the Bureau du Tibet in Brussels will co-organize the next European Inter-parliamentarian Conference on Tibet in Brussels on 8 November 2007. The event will take place at the European Parliament and will gather MEPs, national MPs and Senators from all over Europe, as well as members of the Tibetan Parliament and of the exile administration based in India. Representatives of Tibet support Groups in Europe, NGOs active on China, journalists and relevant experts will also attend the two working sessions on the environmental situation in Tibet/China and on the significance of the 2008 Beijing Olympics Games for human rights in China and Tibet.

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Bora Middle School in the largely nomadic area of Amchok Bora in Gansu, where the seven detained schoolboys were pupils.

CHILDREN DETAINED AND SEVERELY BEATEN FOR ALLEGED POLITICAL GRAFFITI

Four schoolboys from a group of seven detained on around September 7 are still believed to be in custody after being beaten for an alleged offence of scribbling graffiti calling for the Dalai Lama's return or freedom for Tibet on walls in a Tibetan area of Gansu province, China. A fifth boy is reportedly very ill in hospital with possible head injuries following maltreatment in Xiahe detention center, and there are concerns about his condition. Two other boys, both 14, have been sent home upon payment of large fines by their families. All of the boys, who were made to carry out hard labor while in detention, are from nomad families and were studying at Bora Middle School in Labrang (Chinese: Xiahe) county in Gannan prefecture.

A monk from Bora monastery in the same area, Jamyang Gyatso, was released from custody last week after being detained in connection with the same incident. He was reportedly severely beaten while in detention.

Dozens of students were initially detained on the same day as the teenage boys, a day after the graffiti appeared on the walls of the school and the village police station, but all except the seven teenagers were released within two days. School staff were also questioned.

The two boys who were sent home on around September 24, both 14, were allowed to leave on condition that they were confined to their villages, and on the payment of a 4000 yuan (\$532) fine each by their parents. One

child, reportedly called Lhamo Tseten, aged 15, has been taken to a hospital in Labrang for treatment for serious injuries, believed to be head injuries resulting from beatings. Some of the boys were reportedly beaten with electric shock prods.

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which China is a State Party:

- Children have the right to freedom of expression.
- No child should be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, or detained unlawfully or arbitrarily.
- Children who are legally detained should be held only as a matter of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time. Children in detention have the right to contact with their families and to prompt access to legal assistance.

ICT has called on the EU to seek the immediate release of the remaining detainees and to seek urgent clarification on the well-being of the hospitalized child, including how such serious injuries were sustained while in police custody. ■