



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Court rejects appeal of Tibetan anti-corruption campaigner

Read online: <https://savetibet.org/court-rejects-appeal-of-tibetan-anti-corruption-campaigner>

June 18, 2020

ICT: “China must immediately release Anya Sengdra and protect peaceful activists in Tibet”

A Chinese court in a Tibetan area rejected on June 17, 2020 the appeal of Tibetan activist Anya Sengdra (also written as A-nya Sengdra), who received a seven-year prison sentence in 2019 for his peaceful campaign against corruption by Chinese government officials.

The appeals of eight other Tibetans were also rejected.

Anya Sengdra was sentenced on Dec. 6, 2019 for “the crimes of provoking troubles, forming a mob to disturb social order, and other evil cases” by the Gade (Chinese: Gande) County people’s court in Golog (Guoluo) Prefecture in Qinghai province.

Lin Qilei, Anya Sengdra’s lawyer, had mentioned to the media then that the verdict will not be accepted and there would be an appeal. The appeal hearing was initially scheduled for April 27. However, it was postponed the evening before that date, and Western diplomatic sources indicated that the reason given was that the judge had become indisposed.

The Golog (Chinese: Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Intermediate Court, Qinghai province, dismissed Anya Sengdra’s appeal after a hearing on June 16 and 17, his lawyer said.

The International Campaign for Tibet calls for Anya Sengdra’s immediate release.

Lawyer’s tweet

On June 17, Lin Qilei, Anya Sengdra’s lawyer posted the following on Twitter:

“Tibetan Anya Sengdra and others are suspected of the crimes of provoking troubles and gathering crowds to disrupt social order in the second instance of their trial, and after two days of trial on the Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Intermediate Court, and their sentencing in court is to ‘dismiss the appeal, maintain the original sentence.’ The trial ended at 6 PM on June 17, 2020. As the defenders, we express our regret.”

Sources told ICT that the lawyer and the family of Anya Sengdra had hoped to meet him at the detention center, following the appeal hearing, but the authorities there did not permit them to do so. The lawyer posted a photo with the family taken right after the hearing.

ICT demands his release

The International Campaign for Tibet calls for the immediate release of Anya Sengdra, who has been detained solely for peacefully campaigning against corruption and for criticizing government policies.

ICT also calls on the international community to urge the Chinese government to release Anya Sengdra and protect individuals like him who stand up in their communities for good governance and justice.

That is particularly important in Tibet, which the Chinese government has brutally occupied for more than 60 years.

Anti-corruption campaigns

Anya Sengdra has been a staunch campaigner against government corruption since at least 2014, when he and other local Tibetan nomads founded a volunteer organization called Mangdon Ling (which means “Public Affairs Forum”) to fight against local authorities’ abuse of power.

He criticized local officials for siphoning off and misusing public money—notably from relocated nomads—and ran campaigns against illegal mining activities and the hunting and poaching of endangered animals.

Following his arrest on Sept. 4, 2018, Anya Sengdra was beaten and held without access to a lawyer for his first 48 days in detention. His wife and other family members were not permitted to see him. There were concerns about his health.

Anya Sengdra is one of more than 500 Tibetan political prisoners. Under Chinese rule, Tibetans are arrested and tortured simply for exercising their basic rights.

Vague offenses

“Provoking trouble,” which Anya Sengdra was accused of, is a vaguely worded offense under Article 293 of Chinese Criminal Law.

Chinese authorities have increasingly used the offense in recent years to persecute and launch reprisals against human rights defenders and other activists critical of government policies and practices.

Anya Sengdra was also accused of “evil” acts. In 2019, China used a nationwide campaign against “black” and “evil forces” to crack down on Tibetans’ loyalty to the Dalai Lama and to their unique culture. Twenty-one Tibetans were known to receive prison sentences in May 2019 in connection with the campaign.

In September, China increased its efforts to criminalize ordinary behavior by Tibetans by introducing new measures “for Eliminating Pornography and Illegal Content in the Tibet Autonomous Region.”

Despite their title, the measures make it illegal for Tibetans to share information about the Dalai Lama’s proposal for Tibetan autonomy and aim to turn Tibetans against one another.

UN Intervention

In May 2020, four UN human rights experts and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention urged the Chinese government to drop charges against Anya Sengdra.

The UN human rights experts were concerned that Anya Sengdra’s “legitimate work” would be criminalized. They also expressed concern about reports of deterioration in his physical and mental health while in detention.

Anya Sengdra’s rights and the rights of the Tibetans should be “fully respected,” the experts said in their statement. China must comply with its international law obligations, which include removing the charges against Anya Sengdra, they said.

ICT quote

International Campaign for Tibet President Matteo Mecacci:

“The rejection this week of Anya Sengdra’s appeal is another black mark on China’s criminal justice system in Tibet, where an indictment almost without any exception equals a conviction.

“Anya Sengdra is in prison simply because he campaigned against government corruption and the misuse of public funds. In a sane society, he would be praised as a good citizen. But under the warped rule of China’s authoritarian Communist Party—the same regime that, let us not forget, repressed whistleblowers doctor who wanted to alert the public about the dangers of the coronavirus pandemic—Anya Sengdra is considered ‘evil.’

“But the only evil in this case is China’s criminalization of civic behavior by Tibetans. We call on China to release Anya Sengdra immediately, and we urge the international community to speak up for him and for all prisoners of conscience in Tibet.”



International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) | 1825 Jefferson Place NW | Washington, DC 20036 | United States of America
Phone: (202) 785-1515 | Fax: (202) 785-4343 | info@savetibet.org

ICT Europe
Funenpark 1D | 1018 AK
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266
icteurope@savetibet.nl

ICT Deutschland e.V.
Schönhauser Allee 163 | 10435
Berlin, Germany
Phone: +49 (0)30 27879086
Fax: +49 (0)30 27879087
info@savetibet.de

ICT Brussels
11, rue de la linière | 1060
Brussels, Belgium
Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32
info@save-tibet.eu