



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Two Tibetans imprisoned for a song praising the Dalai Lama

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Two Tibetans are facing years in a Chinese prison on charges of “subversion” and “leaking state secrets” after they composed and circulated a song in praise of the Dalai Lama.

A Tibetan source who wished to remain anonymous said the lyricist, Khadro Tseten, was sentenced to seven years, while the singer, Tsego, was sentenced to three years.

The sentences were handed down by a Chinese court in northeastern Tibet in early July. This case is part of a pattern of Tibetan singers, artists, and writers receiving lengthy prison sentences amid deepening oppression.

Tibetan language media, including Voice of Tibet, Radio Free Asia, Voice of America, and the Tibet Times have reported on the case. ICT has not seen official information in Chinese government outlets about it.

Talking to ICT, the source said the information was acquired from an acquaintance in Tibet. The source further said that Chinese police detained Khadro Tseten, Tsego and an unnamed Tibetan woman were detained on April 26, 2019 (Voice of America also reported this as the day of detention) after a song in praise of the Dalai Lama circulated on Chinese social media.

The source added that the song was written by Khadro Tseten and sung by Tsego, and was posted on social media by the unnamed woman. ICT has not yet been able to verify the details, but in general China maintains strict surveillance of content on social media, and censors and deletes any material that goes against the Communist Party’s political interest. The woman was reported to have been released after around a year of detention, according to Tibetan language media.

According to the source, Khadro Tseten’s seven-year prison term was a cumulative sentence for subversion of state, for which the court handed down a five year imprisonment term, and two additional years for leaking state secrets. As a student, Khadro Tseten had spent two years in detention in the past in connection to Tibetan students protest in Rebgong and was released in 2014, the source added. ICT documented detentions of at least 18 students in Rebgong connected to the protests there, but has no record of Khadro Tseten’s involvement.

Khadro and Tsego are believed to be in their mid to late twenties and are from Dokarmo township, Tsekhog (Chinese: Zeku) County, Malho (Chinese: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province.

Cases of imprisonment of Tibetans for songs about Dalai Lama

Over the years, there have been a number of cases in which the Chinese authorities have detained and sentenced Tibetans who have sung songs in praise of the Dalai Lama.

In 1993, a group of 14 nuns, who were already in prison in Lhasa for demonstrating against Chinese rule in Tibet, had their sentences extended after they were found recording a song in praise of the Dalai Lama.

In 2012, a Tibetan from Amchok township in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province, was detained for releasing songs in praise of the Dalai Lama.

In 2013, Two Tibetan singers from Ngaba were imprisoned for two years each following their release of a music DVD including songs about self-immolations and the Dalai Lama, according to exile Tibetan sources.



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