



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

UN experts raise cases of detained and “disappeared” Tibetans

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Four independent UN human rights experts and bodies have raised the cases of the detained Tibetans Rinchen Tsultrim and Go Sherab Gyatso in a communication to the Chinese government that became public today.

In the communication, the UN Working Group on Involuntary and Enforced Disappearances, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the special rapporteurs on minority issues and freedom of religion or belief express “serious concern for the alleged arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance” of the two Tibetans.

The experts add that they “are particularly concerned at information indicating that these detentions are not isolated events, but reflect a worrying pattern of arbitrary and incommunicado detentions, closed trials, and unknown charges and verdicts against the Tibetan religious minority in China, some of them amounting to enforced disappearances.”

Citing the obligations of the Chinese government under international human rights law, the experts urge the Chinese government to provide information on the whereabouts of the two Tibetans and the legal grounds for their arrest and detention.

ICT quote

Kai Mueller, head of UN advocacy at the International Campaign for Tibet, said:

“We strongly welcome the UN experts’ communication to the Chinese government. The cases of Rinchen Tsultrim and Go Sherab Gyatso reflect a worrisome pattern of repression in Tibet, where the Chinese authorities relentlessly persecute dissent and independent thought. Rinchen Tsultrim and Go Sherab Gyatso must be released immediately, as they have been imprisoned solely for the exercise of freedom of speech and thought.”

“Prolonged incommunicado detention is worrisome because of the danger of torture against unaccounted-for detainees. We believe this is a serious risk, as two Tibetans died earlier this year while in or immediately after detention due to injuries sustained in detention.”

“We urge the international community, governments and parliaments to publicly raise the cases of Rinchen Tsultrim and Go Sherab Gyatso, as well as of other Tibetans, and to consider, in earnest, consequences with regard to their bilateral relations with the government of China. In Tibet, nothing has changed for the better, and the country must be back on the agenda to prevent a further deterioration of human rights conditions.”

Rinchen Tsultrim

The Tibetan monk Rinchen Tsultrim (29 years old), held in detention incommunicado for exercising his freedom of opinion and thoughts, is known to be detained in Mianyang Prison in Sichuan province. The International Campaign for Tibet believes that Rinchen was charged with “incitement to split the country” for expressing his views on the Chinese social media WeChat app.

His whereabouts were completely unknown for over a year and a half after Chinese police “disappeared” him on July 27, 2019 for his online messages. After submitting multiple inquiries about his wellbeing and whereabouts, Rinchen’s family were officially informed by the Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) Public Security Bureau on March 23, 2021 that he had been sentenced to four years and six months in prison.

Although it is now known that he is imprisoned in Mianyang Prison, details of his trial, assuming there was one, charge and sentence could not be ascertained. As of September 2021, no family member has been able to see Rinchen in person or via video-link while he is in prison. Amnesty International has also raised grave concerns for Rinchen Tsultrim’s condition and wellbeing, and his lack of access to his family and legal representation.

Go Sherab Gyatso

The prominent Tibetan Buddhist scholar and writer Go Sherab Gyatso (46 years old) was detained in Chengdu, Sichuan province by officials from the Tibet Autonomous Region on Oct. 26, 2020. No information about the circumstances of his detention or his current whereabouts was available. It is therefore still unclear as to the reason for his detention. Gyatso is a prolific writer, having published several books on Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, tradition and culture. These include commentaries on the autobiography of the Tibetan Buddhist master Tsongkhapa, a book of advice by Sakya Pandita and Gedun Choephel’s “The Golden Surface,” the story of a cosmopolitan’s pilgrimage.

Gyatso has also published critiques about the Tibetan monastic education system, calling for a broadening of the monastic community’s exposure. Read the communication by the UN experts and bodies. Learn more about political prisoners in Tibet.



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