



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Imprisoned Tibetan businessman's sister continues her protest vigil in Lhasa

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The sister of an unjustly imprisoned Tibetan businessman was briefly detained by China's authorities this week after she protested for justice for her ailing brother outside a court in Tibet's capital city.

On Jan 31, 2023, Gonpo Kyi (Chinese: Gongbao Ji), the sister of imprisoned Tibetan businessman Dorjee Tashi (Duoji Zhaxi), staged a protest in front of the Tibet Autonomous Region Higher People's Court in Lhasa, but within a few minutes, security officers removed her from the site. According to sources close to the family, she was briefly detained before being released with a warning.

Images of the vigil that the International Campaign for Tibet secured from sources show Gonpo Kyi holding a sign in Chinese that reads, "Tibet's higher people's court perverts the law." An unidentified person next to her has a sign that says, "injustice."

Sources added that Gonpo has been threatened with arrest if she continues her protests advocating for justice for her younger brother.

After exhausting all official channels for over a decade and maintaining a low profile, Gonpo started openly advocating for her brother's release in June 2022. In a video statement, she pledged to continue her protests until her brother is freed. The COVID-19 outbreak in Tibet temporarily halted her protests, but she resumed them in Dec. 2022. Her most recent protest on Jan. 31, 2023 was her fourth known protest in front of the court.

About Dorjee Tashi

The International Campaign for Tibet has documented the torture of Dorjee Tashi, a famous Tibetan businessman and philanthropist, during his pre-trial detention, as well as his family's efforts to seek justice for him.

Dorjee is currently incarcerated in the Tibet Autonomous Region Prison No. 1 (also known as Drapchi Prison), where Tibetan prisoners are known to be subjected to torture.

Dorjee was a successful businessman who owned a luxury hotel chain and real estate companies in Tibet when he was arrested in July 2008. He was framed as a "secessionist" by spiteful and vindictive political and party leaders taking advantage of the political situation in the wake of the mass Tibetan protests. While political charges were later dropped, he was declared guilty of "loan fraud" and sentenced to life imprisonment by the Lhasa Intermediate People's Court on May 17, 2010.

Both the United States and the European Union have expressed concerns about Dorjee's arbitrary detention. During the 51st session of the UN Human Rights Council (Sept. 12 to Oct. 7, 2022), the European Union called for Dorjee's immediate and unconditional release. The United States also recognized his detention in its 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.

The International Campaign for Tibet urges the international community to continue to call for Dorjee Tashi's release.

Family's advocacy

Family members of Dorjee Tashi, including his brother Dorjee Tseten (Duoji Cidan), have been actively campaigning for justice. On Jan. 6, 2023, Dorjee Tseten posted several video clips to address the situation.

In the first clip, Dorjee Tseten is seen speaking in front of the prison on Jan. 6 and states that he and other family members are concerned about Dorjee Tashi's health due to the vague and incomplete information provided by the prison officials. He also stated that they are at the prison to request clear answers about Dorjee Tashi's health condition and to learn how they can assist in getting him medical treatment as his health is in poor state.

In the second clip, Dorjee Tseten stands in front of the Tibet Autonomous Region prison and says that he has not been able to visit his brother in person since 2019, despite the law granting family members visitation rights. He states that this denial of visitation is a violation of the country's constitution and prison laws.

In another clip, Dorjee Tseten posted on the internet (presumably Chinese social media) says that he has been petitioning for a retrial of his brother's unjust sentence of 15 years.

In the video clip, Dorjee Tseten states: "I am Dorjee Tashi's brother. My brother has been in prison for 15 years. For a retrial of the unjust sentencing of my brother, I have petitioned multiple times to the police, the procuratorate and the court. Recently I went to the prison to ask for a visit to my brother but the prison officials did not let me meet him under the pretext of the pandemic. It has now been 5 years since I met my brother. Recently, I went to the prison to ask for a virtual meeting with my brother. But the prison officials told me that a meeting cannot take place as my brother has cataract which needs to be removed surgically. A few days ago, I again asked for a meeting, but the prison official again denied me a meeting telling me that my brother has cataract, heart disease and hemorrhoid. On Jan. 6, I went to the prison again to ask how I and the family can participate in my brother's treatment. The officer with the identifying number 5402200 told me it is not possible to participate and told us to apologize publicly to the prison administration as our open advocacy has brought a bad image to the prison. Since all we did was to tell the fact that we and the lawyer have not been able to meet Dorjee Tashi, which is provided for in the law, we cannot apologize to the prison administration."



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